A YEAR IN THE NAVY

JOSEPH HUSBAND

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A YEAR IN THE NAVY.
AMERICA AT WORK. With frontispiece.
A YEAR IN A COAL MINE. With frontispiece.

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TO MY WIFE

PREFACE

It is my desire in this foreword to call particular attention to the splendid accomplishments of two distinguished officers of the United States Navy who with rare ability and perseverance in large measure created and brought to high efficiency the great organizations which it was their honor to command, organizations which proved of the utmost significance to the winning of the war.

At the Great Lakes Naval Training Station, Captain William A. Moffett, U.S.N., Commandant, developed not only the largest, but unqualifiedly the most efficient, naval training establishment that the world has ever seen, from whose gates thousands of the youth of the Nation passed on to their duties with the

ships which made possible the safe transportation of men and stores across the sea.

But of equal importance was another service of inestimable worth. A thousand miles inland, in the great agricultural center of the United States, this station became under Captain Moffett a power for patriotism. Here the Navy became visualized to that part of the population which never before had realized the romance of the sea. The spirit of this vast camp of fifty thousand men; the enthusiasm and discipline of the recruits; the martial music of its great bands and the pervading spirit of vigorous patriotism, gave to the Middle West a vital and inspiring illustration of the true worth of military training and a suggestion of what its consistent continuation might hold in future years for the upbuilding of the moral and physical fiber of the Nation's youth. The credit

for this accomplishment belongs primarily to Captain Moffett; it was he who made the Navy known to inland States which heretofore had barely realized its existence.

Across the Atlantic, at Brest, in France, under Vice-Admiral Henry B. Wilson, U.S.N., another complicated organization was built and perfected with equal ability, under the difficult conditions imposed by its situation in a foreign land. In the brief period of our participation in the war, the men of this organization achieved a record and a reputation that can but grow with passing years. Under the command of Vice-Admiral Wilson, the forces of the Navy in French waters escorted, with marvelous freedom from disaster, vast stores and a mighty army through waters infested with the submarines of a daring enemy. By his rare tact and personal charm a spirit

of coöperation, confidence, and cordiality was established between the people of France and the naval representatives of the United States from Brest to the Spanish line. An officer and a gentleman, he rendered to his country a quiet service to which it is impossible to accord an adequate recognition.

To the other officers under whom I served at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station and on the several ships to which I was later attached in foreign waters, I wish here to express my deep appreciation for their fine spirit of consideration, helpfulness, and enthusiasm which enabled me to accomplish the more readily the minor duties which I was qualified to perform.

It is, indeed, a rare inspiration to have known and served under these several gentlemen, and the recollection of their spirit and unqualified patriotism brings

the realization that the temper of the glorious Navy of the past still lives to-day and will live as long as the United States endures.

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A YEAR IN THE NAVY

I

ORDINARY SEAMEN, U.S.N.

FORTY miles north of Chicago, on the high bluffs that overlook Lake Michigan, the Naval Training Station of the Great Lakes stretches a mile back to the railroad tracks from a mile frontage on the shore; and even beyond the tracks the latest additions have crept out on the rolling prairie. Here, covering approximately three hundred acres, the vast camp, with its recent additions to meet the war emergency, houses an average total of twenty-two thousand men — the largest and most complete naval training establishment in the world.

There had been a heavy blizzard in

Chicago the first week in January, and when, on the eighth, I walked up from the railroad station to the great brick entrance, the ground was deep with snow. Beyond the iron gates, hundreds of sailors in white trousers and blue pea-coats were piling the snow back from roads and sidewalks. From the entrance a long, straight road stretched almost to the lake. On either side, and back as far as the eye could see, the substantial brick buildings of the station extended in orderly arrangement, like the buildings of a modern university. At the far end the tall, massive clock-tower of the Administration Building rose red against the blue winter sky. High above it, to the right, the slender tapering towers of the wireless caught their swinging cobwebs of wires up four hundred feet against the blue. Below, everywhere, the red brick buildings and

the glitter of sun-touched snow in zero air.

In the recruiting building a long line of men already were waiting to swear their loyalty to Uncle Sam's Navy, and merciless hostility to his enemies. One by one we filed into the recruiting-room, where a dozen sailors, in neat uniforms with their yeomen's ratings on their blue sleeves, shamed our motley civilian clothes by contrast. Short and tall, stout and thin, from Texas, Ohio, Colorado, and Minnesota, in cheap "sport suits," sweaters, caps, derbies, every kind of clothing, with broken dress-suit-cases, cord-bound, with paper bundles, and many with hands empty — here was young America in its infinite variety.

To the room where physical examinations were held we were passed along with our identifying papers. Yellow sunshine

shone warmly through high windows; there was the moist smell of steam radiators, and the unmistakable and indescribable smell of naked bodies which threw my recollection back to school and college gymnasia. At a desk by the window the surgeon faced the room; two assistants stood beside him; along the side of the room three or four yeomen at tables recorded the results of the examination.

The test was severe, and from our little squad of seventeen, two were cast out for defective eyesight, one for stricture, two for heart trouble, and another for some imperfection of the foot. Weighed, measured, tested for eyesight and color-sight, identified by scars and blemishes, we dressed and then recorded our finger-prints on the voluminous record, which grew as the examination progressed. It was late afternoon and the electric lights

were lighted when we finally stood before the desk of the last officer, and, with right hand lifted, touched the Book with our left and swore to follow the flag by sea or land wherever the fate of war might call us.

In "Two Years Before the Mast" I recollect the phrase, "There is not so helpless and pitiable an object in the world as a landsman beginning a sailor's life"; and in that long first day of my admission to the Navy I began to realize — in but small measure, to be sure — the tremendous change that I was soon to experience, and the vastness of the education that I must acquire before I could hope to be of even slight value in a sailor's capacity.

The Great Lakes Naval Training Station was originally built in 1911, to care for sixteen hundred men. But with the

declaration of war with Germany, the enlargement of its capacity was begun on a stupendous scale. South, north, and west of the station, additional acreage was acquired, and under the direction of enlisted engineers and architects complete villages or camps were built, increasing the capacity of the station to over twenty thousand men. Although the new construction was only for emergency purposes, on land leased for the duration of the war and a year beyond, nothing was omitted by which the comfort of the men might be increased, their health maintained, and the efficiency of their training most expeditiously promoted. They were grouped in camps, each holding several thousand men; the barracks of each camp were arranged about a central square or drill-ground, and each camp was provided with its central steam-heating plant,

mess-kitchen, laundry, dispensary, hospital, drill-halls, and such buildings as are necessary for the officers and the storage and distribution of supplies, as well as a system of hot and cold water, complete sewerage, electric lighting, and fire hydrants.

In order that as much of the material as possible may be salvaged when the war is over and the temporary buildings are taken down, each building was so designed that it might be constructed of boards and timbers of stock sizes, without cutting, so put together that the buildings can be resolved into approximately the identical piles of lumber from which they were built.

Each day hundreds of recruits pass through Chicago on their way to the station. From every corner of the United States, from every walk of life and repre-

senting practically every vocation, they swell the ever-increasing total of our naval forces. For about three months they remain at the station: three weeks in detention, then to the main camp for intensive training, and finally off to sea. With sea-bags neatly packed and shouldered, the blue-clad contingents depart; not with the great band playing, but by night, at hours unknown to the sleeping world. Under the stars the long trains pause, are loaded, and are gone. A few days later the men are put on shipboard at some Atlantic port.

In order to prevent recruits who have been exposed to contagious diseases from being immediately admitted to the main camps, to spread contagion among the men, a detention camp is maintained, where every recruit must pass three weeks of complete isolation from the world and

the main camp. During these three weeks the men are not only regularly examined and constantly observed by the medical staff, but the several vaccinations against smallpox and typhoid are administered, throat-cultures tested, and other physical examinations made, and the elementary principles of seamanship and cleanliness are inculcated by the commander in charge of each company of men.

I had come in my oldest suit, which I planned to throw away as soon as my sailor clothes were issued; and I was a little disappointed to find that I should not get my uniform my first day in camp. My instructions and a friendly sentry directed me to Camp Decatur, and here my papers admitted me, past the sentry, who was dressed like an Esquimau in his great brown storm-proof suit, to a large frame building of substantial construction,

where I answered the innumerable questions of inquisitive yeomen, and received my temporary pay-number and a list of clothing and other articles soon to be supplied to me.

It is interesting to learn the care which the Navy Department exercises in thoroughly equipping its men, and it is particularly gratifying, that, despite the fact that each week many hundred recruits enter the station and are fully equipped, there is apparently an abundance of every article that the recruit requires for his complete outfit.

A white hammock, a blue mattress (which also serves as a life-preserver at sea), a white cotton mattress-cover, two thick white blankets, and a large bath-towel were immediately given to me, and these were plainly stenciled with my name in black paint, in letters an inch

high. With this cumbersome bundle on one shoulder, and in my hand the ancient satchel that I had brought, containing a few toilet articles, I followed my guide to the barrack designated as my home for the three weeks to come.

Deep-set in snow, the low green buildings edged the wooded ravines which empty, almost a mile away, into Lake Michigan. In and out, the winding roads led from group to group of buildings. Occasional groves of trees hinted of summer shade; but to-night, in the dry cold air, the street lights gleamed as sharply as the stars, and struck a twinkling radiance from the snow. Here and there the tall black stacks of the heating-plants flung a smearing streak of smoke along the light evening breeze; fires fed by strong arms and shoulders which in a few short months may be flinging like banks of smoke from

racing destroyers to screen the protected fleet from hostile eyes.

It was almost dark when I reached my barrack, half-way down one of the long streets on the far south side of the detention camp. Each barrack building contains two entirely separate barracks, each accommodating one section, or twenty-four men. These buildings are about one hundred and twenty feet long by thirty feet wide, with a dividing partition in the middle, thus making each barrack about sixty by thirty feet. The entrances are side by side, and lead into separate vestibules, which, in turn, open into the "head" or wash-room, and the main sleeping- and living-room. The wash-rooms are fitted with the most modern white vitreous fixtures; there are hot and cold showers; the floors are of cement, and walls and ceiling are painted white.

The main barrack-room occupies the rest of the space, and is lighted by day by six big windows on each side and four at the south end. Walls, floor, and ceiling are of bright clear matched pine, and the sashes, doors, and casements are painted olive-green. Radiators under the windows keep the room always comfortably warm. At the other end, by the partition which separates the two barracks, is the scullery, which is connected with the main room by a door, as well as by a large opening above a counter over which the food is served. As all food is cooked in the local mess-kitchen, there is no cooking done in the barracks. Below the counter, on pine shelves, scrubbed, as is everything else, after every meal, are neatly stacked the twenty-four white enameled plates, cups, and bowls; and in orderly line on the lowest shelf, lye, soap, cleansers, and so forth,

are arranged. On the right hand the wide counter extends along the wall under double windows, and beneath it is a compartment completely inclosing the garbage-can, which can be removed only through doors opening to the outside of the building, and reached from inside through a circular hole in the counter directly above the can and closed by an aluminum cover. The interior of this compartment is painted white. After every meal the garbage-can is removed by two of the men, the contents are burned in the camp incinerator, the can is sterilized with steam, and the interior of the compartment scrubbed with soap and water.

On the back wall of the scullery is a white enameled kitchen sink supplied with copious hot and cold water, and beside it a large metal sterilizer piped with live steam, in which all dishes, knives,

forks and spoons and dish-rags are sterilized for fifteen minutes after every meal. On the fourth wall, a small cupboard with drawers contains the "silverware" and the writing materials; and on a shelf above are such books and magazines as the men may happen to possess.

In order to assure further the sanitary condition, a pail of formaldehyde solution is kept at one end of the sink, and in this is submerged the drinking cup, which must be taken out and rinsed before use, and immediately put back into the solution.

Half of the main room is occupied by a long pine table with a bench on each side, where the men eat, read, and write; and here along the wall is a long row of hooks, on which each man's blue coat and caps and muffler are hung.

The hammock is a Navy institution.

Here, high above the deck, Jack swings in comfort through the night hours. Where many men must be housed in little space, and where absolute cleanliness is necessary, the hammock solves the problem. A single piece of white canvas, six feet long by about four feet wide, is drawn together at both ends by a dozen ropes, the ends of which are braided together to metal rings, to which are fastened the lashings by which the hammock is suspended, tightly stretched between the jack-stays. The result is a contraction of the sides of the hammock, making a receptacle for all the world like a magnified pea-pod in which even an amateur can sleep in comparative safety and comfort. The south end of the barrack-room is given over to the hammocks, which are swung between the big iron-pipe jack-stays in two rows of twelve hammocks each, head and foot alternat-

ing, at a height of about six feet above the floor. From the center jack-stay are hung our big white bags, containing our belongings; and he is indeed unfortunate whose clothes or other possessions are at any time found in any other place.

I am perhaps elaborating in too great detail on the equipment of the Navy barracks, but it is in the belief that too little is generally known of the marvelous efficiency which is exemplified in this great camp — an efficiency which can be but an expression of a similar efficiency in the great department of which it is a part.

The barrack was only half occupied, and I was warmly greeted by the men, as complete uniform equipment would not be issued until the section of twenty-four men was completed. The barrack "chief," appointed by the company commander

from among the first recruits in the barrack, whose luckless job is to maintain order and neatness among his fellows, without powers of punishment, welcomed me and showed me how to lay my mattress in my hammock, fold my blankets so that my name showed clearly, and hang my towel in an equally exact location on the foot lashings of the hammock.

"Chow!"

It was only half-past four, but Jack is an early riser, retires early, and must be fed accordingly, with breakfast at six-thirty, dinner at eleven-thirty, and supper at four-thirty. Through the open door two of my new comrades suddenly appeared, with a great cylinder swinging between them. Behind them another lugged a huge can, like the old-fashioned milk-can but more complicated in construction, while a fourth carried four long

loaves of white bread in his arms. Deposited in the scullery, the top of the cylinder was unclamped, and from it was lifted a series of aluminum containers nested one on another like the vessels in a fireless cooker. And, in fact, here was something not far different; for these containers, filled several hours before in the mess-kitchen, were opened in the barrack as hot as when the food left the fire; and from the apparent milk-can, in reality a glorified thermos bottle, poured steaming coffee into ready cups.

We sat down at the long table, and my first meal in the Navy was consumed with alacrity. That meal, and every meal since, has been distinctly good: no relishes or frills, but good food, well-cooked and served hot. I have since seen the mess-kitchen, and its system and cleanliness are beyond reproach. Beans are usually

served at one meal a day — big red mealy beans, cooked almost to a soupy consistency. Coffee, tea, and cocoa are served daily, coffee with breakfast and dinner, and tea or cocoa at night; but for some reason unknown to me, all are indiscriminately called "Java." We have meat, usually in a stew, at least twice a day, and always two vegetables with dinner. Bread is provided with every meal, and butter with breakfast. Two or three times a week we have excellent cereal with breakfast, and on the other days soup with dinner. Jam is often served with supper, and we have fresh apples or stewed fruit daily.

Our barrack contains a strange assortment of men, but perhaps no stranger than every other barrack in the camp. Here are two Texas boys, who, during the extreme weather of the past few days,

have clung tenaciously to the radiators. One was a farmer-boy, another a fireman on a Southern railroad. The head bell-boy of a Middle-West hotel swings in a hammock near my own, and on one side of me is a lithe, alert, blond-haired young man of perhaps four-and-twenty, who in his vicarious career has peddled papers, "ridden the rods," bumming from town to town, driven a motor-truck, won his laurels as a successful prize-fighter, and waited on the table in a city cabaret — of all the men he is one of the most attractive, with a lively humor, a pleasant manner, and a quick sense of fair play. He joined the Navy, he told me, because it "offered him the finest opportunity to make a real man of himself."

Another interesting character is a young Wisconsin farmer-boy. Of French descent, from the old Green Bay settle-

ment, he has developed a rugged American character, the result of the purification and enrichment of the blood of an ancient nation by three generations of labor on our northwestern frontier. His bursts of wild laughter and rough horseplay are constantly blended with sentiment when mention is made of the finer things of life, and with a frank affection for those who show their friendship. He was the joint owner of a small farm, which he gave up to join the Navy, with apparently no thought of exemption when duty shone clear.

I must not forget to mention the pessimist of our little company. Away for the first time from home, he weathered the early anguish of nostalgia to settle into a fixed atmosphere of constant gloom. It was he who gathered voluminous data regarding supposititious sickness in the

camp, although it would be hard to find anywhere so large a number of men in such splendid health. It was he who always told with sour visage the latest camp-gossip if it held bad future omens. I last saw him on the way to the camp hospital, where he was to have his tonsils removed; and I think he was really complacent in contemplation of his discomfort to come.

Of the Eastern colleges, Amherst and Harvard are represented in our barrack each by one graduate, and there are a number of boys from various State universities of the West. A painter, whose good-natured laziness and rotund figure immediately won him the nickname of "Butterfly," a hotel clerk, the assistant purchasing agent of a large automobile company, a carpenter, a bond salesman, and a number of youthful clerks and office-

boys complete our numbers. It is interesting to find how many of the recruits are under draft age.

It is still dark with the blackness of five o'clock when the barrack chief calls us in the morning with his "Hit the deck, boys." Five minutes to tumble out into the brilliance of the electric lights flashed on sleeping eyes, fold our blankets, lash up our hammocks, and get out our toilet articles, is all the time allowed. In line we answer to our names, and then a rush to the shower-baths, with much friendly "joshing" and cheering as those hardy ones who turn on the cold water spatter the crowd.

As soon as we are dressed comes the first of our three daily house-cleanings. After the entire room is swept out, all the cracks and corners are cleaned with water and a stiff broom, and then dried with a

cloth. Then the floor is mopped and dried, and the whole room carefully dusted. The same complete cleansing is at the same time given to the "head" or wash-room, the scullery, and the vestibule; and after dinner and supper the operation is repeated. At least twice a week all the windows are washed, and a weekly scrubbing is administered to our benches and tables.

For four days we cleared the ground immediately about our barracks of the winter's accumulation of snow, which had piled about the buildings in four- or five-foot drifts. With huge improvised sleds, carts, boxes, and every possible kind of receptacle, the forty-eight men in the two barracks beneath our roof loaded the snow and dragged it to a near-by ravine. Under a bright sun shining in a cloudless sky, hundreds of sailors from the other

barracks, like the uniformed students of some great university, dashed up and down the slippery roads with frequent collisions and endless merriment.

In command of each company of men in the detention camp is a young seaman who has passed through the School of Instruction, where these men are trained to instruct the recruits, not only in the rudiments of drill and seamanship, but especially in cleanliness, both personal and general, and in deportment and obedience. Our company commander is a fine big Texan, with a soft southern inflection, a ready smile, and a rigidity of purpose that compels prompt obedience. As likely as not he will appear at five in the morning to catch the laggard riser, or at midnight to check the man on watch in the barrack-room. By day he is our counselor and guide and drill-master. Under his

crisp commands the long blue-clad lines tramp back and forth across the snow-packed drill-ground. "Squads right into line, march!" and we swing sharply past him. A dozen other companies are drilling also, under their respective commanders. It is an inspiring scene.

A few days after my arrival our barrack quota was completed, and we marched down to headquarters to receive our complete outfit. Up to this time we all had to a certain extent retained our past identity; by the cut and fashion of our garments we clung to our little niche in civil life. But now all past identification was swept aside. Rapidly we stripped, in a great white-painted room, casting to one side all articles we did not wish to save, and tying in a bundle the garments we might wish to send home. Through a door the naked column passed, and here we were

sorted into two files, each of perhaps a hundred men. We had brought our big cotton mattress-covers with us, and using these as bags, we passed to the end of the room, across which was a long counter. Behind the counter a dozen men served us with the various articles of our equipment, which they tossed into our bags with lightning-like rapidity and accuracy. And so specialized were they that a single glance at each man as he neared the counter was sufficient measurement by which to supply him with exactly the proper size and fit of garment. With distended bags we paused again in the back of the room, hurriedly dressed, and again formed in line. And now, as we stood fast, inspectors passed rapidly down the columns, to see that each man had been properly provided with shoes, trousers, and other garments of the right size. Wherever anything

wrong was discovered, the fault was immediately corrected.

It may be of interest to enumerate the various articles provided each sailor by the Government for his personal equipment. The following items are copied from my "Clothing and Small Store Requisition," and are issued to the recruits as the articles are needed: . . . . . .

One pair of arctics, one pair of bathing trunks, two woolen blankets, whisk-broom, scrub-brush, shoe-brush, assorted buttons, needles, and thread, clothes-stops for tying each garment in a compact roll, knitted cap called a "watch cap," cloth "pan-cake" cap, cap-ribbon, comb, two sets of heavy underwear, four sets of summer underwear, woolen gloves, a dozen handkerchiefs, two white hats, jackknife, blue knitted jersey, two white jumpers and trousers, pair of leggins, silk

neckerchief, heavy blue overcoat, blue overshirt and trousers, two towels, soap, six pairs of woolen socks, and a pair of high shoes. All this is provided without cost to the recruit.

To complete our equipment we were, a few days later, supplied with Red Cross "comfort kits," and although they contained some duplications of our government equipment, they filled a big want and were promptly put in use by every one. Socks, mufflers, and wristlets also were given out, and these were particularly appreciated, because of the severity of the weather and our out-of-door life.

There are many hours in Detention, especially after supper, when time hangs heavily, and to the Y.M.C.A. I owe a debt of gratitude for a slim shelf of books over the scullery sink, which the local

Y.M.C.A. representative changes weekly. Collected from households throughout the county, these volumes possessed a rare variety. The first week it was "School-Days at Rugby" that stood boldly forth from the best-selling but less enduring volumes of more recent days. The next week came another assortment, and then it was "Trilby," with Little Billee, Taffy, and the Laird, who helped me keep my thoughts from wandering too often homeward.

Every Saturday morning we are "inspected." Dressed in our blue suits, we stand at attention, with all our possessions spread at our feet on our clean white bags. Every garment is carefully rolled, according to an exact method, into a tight smooth roll, tied three inches from each end with a white "stop," or cord, knotted in a square knot. All the blue bundles are

in one row, white bundles in another, and each garment is so rolled that the stenciled name of the owner appears in the center of the roll. With swinging swords and full uniform, the officers check up our belongings and their appearance, and carefully inspect the cleanliness of the barrack, running white-gloved fingers along the door-tops, in the sink, and along scullery shelves. A dirty window or a trace of dust brings the punishment of additional work in the week to come; but punishment is rarely necessary.

Sickness is the constant foe of any large body of men, but there can be little sickness here. First of all, Detention itself, through which every man must pass before entering the camp, practically eliminates all possibility of the introduction of sickness by fresh recruits. Furthermore, the breaking up of the men in Detention

into several sections of twenty-four men, each section segregated from the others, prevents the spread of sickness in the Detention camp. Conveniently located throughout Detention are a number of completely equipped hospitals and dispensaries, where the recruits are cared for when indisposed. An amusing rule, but one obviously necessary when the remedy is not palatable, is that the patient for whom pills or gargles are prescribed must present himself at the dispensary at the required hours, and take the remedy under the eyes of one of the doctors.

Filled with healthful work and drills that are a recreation, the days have passed quickly. Each evening we sit at the long white-scrubbed pine mess-table and write letters home, read, study, and sew. Then there is laundry work to be done, for we seem to take pride in wash-

ing our own clothes, as it will soon be necessary for us to do on shipboard. Occasionally we have an entertainment, which consists of the Y.M.C.A. phonograph with its dozen worn records, an impromptu sparring bout, or, more often, an improvised band with a strange variety of instruments, to which all keep time with tapping feet and cheers for "Dixie" and "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean." By nine we are ready for our hammocks, and deep breathing and occasional snores are flagrant, often before the guard has opened the last window. Sometimes during the night I wake with a sudden start, and as my eyes catch the matched-board ceiling so close above me, yellow in the glare of a near-by street light which shines in through the window, my thoughts carry me far away before sleep comes again. I am sure that there are

many such thoughts here, although such things are rarely mentioned.

It was a bright blue morning and the sun was still stalking low behind the trees, when a bugle-note brought me suddenly to a halt. I was passing a turn in the road when it reached me. Everywhere blue-coated men and boys were working; their voices sounded here and there, word-snatches on the breeze. Half a mile away, against the pale western sky, a flagstaff pointed high above the green buildings. Fluttering, a flag was mounting to the peak. I stiffened and a shiver seemed to pass through me, the same emotional shiver that comes when the band goes by. My hand snapped to salute; the flag reached the peak, and the red stripes and star-flecked blue stood out against the sky.

II

STUDENTS OF THE SEA

THE three longest weeks of my life were my three weeks in Detention, and yet, to make a paradox, the time passed with surprising rapidity. With the soft spring warmth now filling the air, and a brush of green over the surrounding fields, those three snowbound weeks seem long ago. I suppose it is because there have been so many changes since; and every change you make in the Navy seems revolutionary and drastic.

There were about two thousand men in Detention — boys, more properly speaking, for the average age was slightly less than twenty. Each day a bunch of raw recruits began their life there, to fill the places of those who, having passed their

period of inspection and having received the various vaccinations, had been transferred to the great camp beyond. For some, an exact three weeks was all that was required; for others, the period was longer; and those who had seen a month in the camp were madly impatient to shoulder their neatly packed hammocks and clothes-bags, and be gone to take up the more intensive training for sea.

My detention period ended on the morning of the twenty-second day, a fine clear still winter morning, with a below-zero temperature that creaked in every footfall on the dry packed snow. For two days I had been ready, "rairing to go," as the Texas boys called it; and when the message finally came from the regimental headquarters, I needed only a few minutes to pack and shoulder my belongings, say good-bye to my companions, and take my way.

The Great Lakes Naval Training Station comprises the main camp, a complete naval training establishment of permanent brick buildings, designed to accommodate approximately fifteen hundred men. Surrounding this central unit, are the great recent additions, occupying about five hundred acres, with buildings of semi-permanent construction. These camps bear the suggestive names of naval heroes, and each camp is complete in its equipment, a naval training station in itself. To-day the united camps will accommodate over thirty thousand men; and since the beginning of the war the station has sent more than sixty thousand men to sea. It was to the main camp that I was transferred from Detention.

The next few weeks passed with relatively little incident. I was quartered in one of the big permanent brick buildings,

and the days were so filled with ceaseless activity that time passed quickly.

In a great room on the second floor our hammocks were swung in two long rows, quite as they were in Detention; but here I was associated with boys who had all been some time on the station, and more was expected of us. Every morning at five the bugles sounded through the camp: first, one far off and very distant to sleep-filled ears; then others took up the summons; and before the last notes were stilled the Master-at-Arms was up and shouting, "Hit the deck, boys!" and we were drunkenly swinging down from our hammocks, a good seven feet, to the floor below.

The company was divided each week into details, each with its particular work to perform. To our detail the floors, always spoken of as "the deck," were given

to be scrubbed, mopped, and dried. Another detail polished the wash-room or "head," to immaculate brilliancy. I was on a "sidewalk detail," and with half a dozen others cleaned the concrete walks about the building of snow or dust, as conditions demanded.

There was something about those morning hours that most of all identifies to me my sojourn in the Main Camp. Clear, cold mornings many of them were, when with brooms we brushed a powder of snow from the walk, often by moonlight. Often in those cold dark mornings, as we brushed the kitchen steps of the mess-hall we would scent on the warm air from opened windows a rich fragrance that is unforgettable. Breakfast for the petty officers' mess was on the fires, and the aroma of bacon, with its suggested complement of fried eggs, filled stomachs

empty from five to a seven-o'clock breakfast with infinite craving. Reluctantly we turned our faces and bent to our sweeping. Then as the moon slowly set behind the mess-hall, the dawn flushed the East with light behind the black silhouette of the Administration Building, and with fingers numb with cold we tramped back to the barrack.

Two thousand sailors ate together in each of the two dining-rooms of the main mess-hall. It was a well-ordered crew, but the sound of so many voices, and the rattle of knives, forks, and dishes made a tumult that could be heard a block. At noon a part of the band played, while we ate, all the popular airs that the boys seemed never to tire of. It was fulsome music, with much brass and a great beating of drums; but it's the way to make "Over There" send a thrill through you.

Mess was served by a white-clad "mess detail," and everything was put on the white board tables with a filled plate at each place, before the men marched in. Navy slang is required, and were a bill-of-fare printed, you would see "Java" for tea or coffee, "punk" for bread, "sand" for salt, and something that sounds like "slumgullion" for any kind of stew.

Our days were filled with drilling in the drill-hall, and, in fact, the greater part of the time of the recruit while on the station is taken up with foot-drill. It is difficult to teach seamanship to landsmen on a station, especially during the winter months; and even were an intensive course in seamanship practical, it could not give the fundamental value derived from these few weeks of drill. It is impossible to describe the change which this work quickly brings in the whole physical and mental

bearing of the recruits. From a mob of slouching individuals, a few short weeks of training develops a company of alert and well-set-up men. Back and forth on the smooth floor the companies pass, white-shod legs swinging in perfect synchronism, shoulders thrown back, and chins drawn in above bare throats. On every shoulder the gun-barrels slant in parallel lines; feet beat a drum cadence on the floor. Company commanders and petty officers shout crisp commands; there is a rhythm of drums; the dark blue lines break to form "Company square," or "on right into line."

On Wednesday we passed in review before the commanding officer. With our leggins and braids scrubbed to snowy whiteness, we swung down the hall behind the band. There are bands and bands, but the Navy bands play a music

of their own; there is a spirit in their fast marches that makes you forget everything; you would follow on anywhere.

Often in the early morning, while we were still sweeping the sidewalks, distant calls and cheers would tell us of a draft leaving for sea; and sometimes we would see the long dark columns marching to their trains. There was no band at their head, but none was needed; and even the intermittent cheers from opened windows brought a vivid realization of why we were here and what it was all about.

Curiously, there is little discussion of the war at the station. There is too much to occupy us, to leave time for speculation. Every one knows he will some day go to sea; a vague realization to most of the boys, for very few have ever seen the ocean, and many have never even seen anything bigger than a row-boat. The

general desire is to see Paris, and it is confidently assured that this will be granted, and that at some later date we shall probably march in triumph through Berlin, with the station band at the head playing a Sousa march. Then we will all come home and be comfortable heroes for the rest of our days. Germany is personified in the Kaiser; and whenever he is mentioned, it is usually in relation to some picturesque form of personal violence that the speaker hopes he may wreak upon him. It is a happy-go-lucky crowd, filled with youth and enthusiasm.

In connection with the cheerful unconcern of the average recruit, it is hard not to mention its relation to the effect which the death of one of the boys has upon his fellows. In so large a community sickness is sometimes fatal; and although, considering our numbers, these occasions are

rare, there is now and then a call for a "firing squad," if a sailor's burial is to be held in Chicago or some near-by town. At these times the prospect of a trip, despite the occasion, brings many times the required quota of volunteers, and the squad invariably departs with a holiday aspect. On their return the two chief topics of conversation center on the appearance of the deceased and the meals which the party enjoyed; and the next day we are drilling again, and the world moves quite as cheerfully as before.

In the eyes of our captain we are boys, and, to be sure, our average age is scarcely twenty. In those years between seventeen and twenty character is moulded, and it is here that the navy in general, and perhaps this station in particular, performs its greatest service to the country. From these months of healthful exercise and

clean environment comes a strengthening of the moral as well as the physical fiber; there is born a sense of unity, order, and discipline; right and wrong are clearly separated and character is brought forward as an honorable and desirable attribute.

In an essay, "A Twentieth-Century Outlook," written not long before his death, the late Captain A. T. Mahan voices an opinion that finds fulfillment in the Great Lakes Station, by a happy coincidence to-day commanded by a man at one time his aide:

"Is it nothing, in an age when authority is weakening and restraints are loosening, that the youth of a nation passes through a school in which order and obedience and reverence are learned, where the body is systematically developed, where ideals of self-surrender, of courage, of manhood, are inculcated, necessarily, because of

fundamental conditions of military success? Is it nothing that youths out of the fields and the streets are brought together, mingled with others of higher intellectual antecedents, taught to work and to act together, mind in contact with mind, and carrying back into civil life that respect for constituted authority which is urgently needed in these days when lawlessness is erected into a religion? It is a suggestive lesson to watch the expression and movements of a number of rustic conscripts undergoing their first drill, and to contrast them with the finished results as seen in the faces and bearing of the soldiers that throng the streets. A military training is not the worst preparation for an active life, any more than the years spent at college are time lost, as another school of Militarians insists."

In connection with the part the Navy

plays in preparing boys "for an active life," no better illustrations could be found to verify Admiral Mahan's contention than here before my eyes. Foremost come those general fundamental builders of character which are here taught and inspired — subordination, discipline, team-play, cleanliness, and the readiness instantly to obey. With minds and bodies well-ordered, the boys are separated into groups, to specialize according to their past experience or inclination. In the Yeoman School hundreds of young men are learning stenography, typewriting, and the fundamentals of their mother tongue. For paymaster advancements others are taking up studies, including finance, political economy, geography, and mathematics. In the Department of Public Works, engineers, architects, and draftsmen are being made. Here, with the in-

spiration of the tapering towers, often lost aloft in morning mists, others learn to send "winged words." In the hospitals some are taught the merciful arts of healing, and almost a thousand, under the guidance of the world's greatest bandmaster, are learning to stir men's souls with music. But chief of all, in the many schools for seamanship, they are learning to guide our argosies from sea to sea, in the peaceful years to come, and to bring back the heritage of the past. Nor must I fail to mention that great school of ground aviation, where several thousand are learning the intricacies of our coming navy of the sky. We have here a vast university, with a curriculum that builds strongly for the future.

My departure from the main station to one of the big outlying camps came — as

all things seem to come in the Navy — at a minute's notice. It was a Saturday, and I was already in line to march out for thirty-six hours' "shore leave," when the order came for me to "shove off" for Camp Perry, to take up the job of assistant company commander in the Sixth Regiment.

The rank of company commander is peculiar, I believe, to the Great Lakes Station. From the recruits, from time to time, men are selected to act as chiefs of companies of approximately one hundred and fifty men. They are to their companies as a captain in the army is to the men under him — a commander in drills, responsible for the welfare, cleanliness, and comfort of the men, and responsible further for the condition of the barracks in which they live. In the front of each barrack, facing the company street, is the

room of the company commander and his assistant. In the rear, in two long barracks, the men swing the white hammocks from iron jackstays high above the deck. Under the company commander are the company clerk, who checks the muster-roll and attends to the clerical details, and two chiefs of section, who exercise an under-authority over the men and lead their respective sections in drill.

Camp Perry was filled with men who had practically completed their sojourn on the station, and many of them were serving their second "hitch," or reënlistment in the Navy. I had, up to this time, known only the credulous recruit, and my new experience with a crowd erudite in station ways was at first discouraging. In the eyes of a sea-going "salty" sailor we are all landsmen, and hence "rookies," until we have made one cruise; but even

among rookies there are grades of distinction, and every man is almost childishly eager to have, at least, a "sea-going" appearance, although he may never have smelled salt water. Our leggins, for instance, when new, are a rich tan color, but the constant scrubbing of months bleaches them snowy white. Accordingly, the few weeks' recruit soon learns to spend incredible energy bleaching his leggins by artificial means, to approximate the longer enlisted men, and any recipe is eagerly accepted to attain the desired end. I remember, in Detention, how a number of the boys utilized the otherwise futile can of talcum powder provided in our Red Cross kits to powder their leggins each morning. And an enterprising tailor in the near-by city of Waukegan must have acquired a small fortune sewing stiff with cotton thread the brims of our white hats,

to give them the desired "salty" appearance.

There are many types of men here, but they quickly become distinguishable and fall into natural groups. Of these one is the "hard-boiled" variety that delights in harmless bullying, and when given a little authority, becomes sometimes a burden to the rest of the community. Most of our "hard-boiled" members have achieved their reputation with the hope that it would give them a bearing supposedly more seafaring. There are a few who are natural bullies, but they are the minority; in the majority of cases, however, the men are without affectation, natural in their ways and speech, glad to exchange letters from home, and unashamed to show their finer emotions when the occasion arises.

There were about fifteen hundred men

in the Sixth, and for the most part they were enlisted in the ground-aviation branch of the service — expert motor machinists from the great automobile factories of Detroit, taxi-drivers, garage workers, machinists, and a general mixture of various trades combined into one unit. Several of the men in my company wore red "hash marks" — a diagonal band of red on the sleeve, just above the cuff, each mark signifying an enlistment in the Navy. To these was accorded a natural deference due to their long experience, and their habits of dress and speech were quietly observed as a pattern to follow. From them also, in the few idle periods that were allowed us, came tales of foreign ports, of target practice, of the fleet, and of "shore liberty" in every quarter of the world, with the inevitable wind-up of a free-for-all to the ultimate victory of the

Yankee tar over the crew of some foreign battleship.

Our entertainment is well provided. In the great drill-halls are shown nightly the latest moving-picture films, and on frequent occasions complete theatrical productions are gratuitously staged by the managements of the Chicago theaters. Never, I imagine, have some of the actors and actresses received such ovations. Only a few nights ago I attended a vaudeville performance. Three thousand sailors crowded the front seats in the vast drill-hall. A sailor orchestra played the overture. Then, before the curtain appeared a woman in an evening gown of the rich theatrical vogue, and to the silent hall she sang a new topical song, to the effect that we had crossed the Delaware, we had crossed the Rio Grande, and we would cross the Rhine. At the last note a roar

burst from the audience. Again and again she repeated the last verse; and when she finally left the stage, she was weeping, and the crowd had taken up the refrain under the guidance of the waving arms of the leader of the orchestra.

The manly art of self-defense is not neglected in our curriculum, nor, for that matter, are any of the sports that bring recreation to healthy men and boys. A former champion of the Atlantic fleet, now an ensign, U.S.N., is in charge of the boxing, and from our great numbers is drawn a wealth of pugilistic material. On Wednesday evenings in the winter, and in summer in the afternoons in a natural amphitheater, the talent of the several camps is matched in the ring; and before the cheering white-clad audience nerve, skill, and determination are matched in clean-cut bouts which give indication of

the spirit that is here undergoing training to meet on another day, in more bloody fields, an antagonist who may not play so closely to the rules of the celebrated marquis.

Athletics are an important part of the life of a sailor. On sea there are frequent boat-races between ships of the fleet, and at the station we find equivalent competitive exercise in boxing, track-races, and football and baseball games between the teams of the several camps. In winter the basket-ball team makes a fairly extensive tour of the country, and such trips of the athletic teams have their positive value in attracting young men of virile type to the Navy. Wrestling is another sport that brings to the front the manhood of the boy, and I have seen a thousand faces tense in the white electric light following the snaky twistings of the heroes of the

padded ring, impulsive cheers recognizing the subtlety of each particular hold. In the basement of one of the main buildings is a large white swimming-pool; on the floor above, a complete gymnasium stands open for the use of the sailors; and in another part of the same building is a bowling-alley. Jack's physical fitness and entertainment seem assured.

It would be ingratitude to fail to mention the various buildings maintained through different organizations by public contribution, for the recreation and amusement of the enlisted men. First, if for no other reason than by the scope of its operation, is the Y.M.C.A., and the Great Lakes is fortunate in possessing at least half a score of these practical buildings. In them are provided writing materials and desks, and this alone, I am confident, is responsible for fifty per cent of

the "letters home" — letters that without this simple suggestion might never be written. Here also are big warm stoves, magazines, and occasional moving pictures in the evening. I am sorry that the rules of the station, due primarily to the frame construction of the buildings, prohibit indoor smoking. It is the only thing of the kind that the Y.M.C.A. cannot afford us.

Similar buildings are maintained with equal efficiency by the Knights of Columbus; but there are two other activities which seem to me to deserve perhaps even more detailed mention than the foregoing, because of the fact that the more limited scope of their operations has given them less general publicity.

The Young Women's Christian Association fills an unquestioned place in the life of our station. There is something,

truly, in the "woman's touch" that can be found in no organization under masculine direction; and to boys and men far separated from mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts, the open fires, chintz curtains, and dainty furnishing of the Y.W.C.A. Hostess Houses give a touch of femininity that is tacitly appreciated. But the even greater function of these houses, presided over by gracious women, whose presence is an inestimable service, is their contribution to the station of a meeting place for men and women; a right environment, where mothers and fathers may meet their boys, and where Nancy may meet Jack for a cup of tea and a sandwich, and listen to something or other on the phonograph while conversation flows on in the quiet channels of decent surroundings.

The other organization that I have in

mind is the American Library Association. During the past two months I have been stationed "west of the tracks," in Camp Perry, and, later, in Camp Dewey. Midway between is the building of the A.L.A., and here I quickly found a quiet haven for study, in a big, warm, well-aired building, filled with books that met every desire of study or relaxation, presided over by intelligent gentlemen eager to give their help to the war by sharing with the boys their wider intellectual points of view.

Our health is a matter of no less concern, however, than our mental welfare, and in this matter the Government shares no responsibility with outside interests. Needless to say, our hospitals, dispensaries, and so forth are of the highest order of efficiency; but a description of these is

but the description of efficient hospitals anywhere. It is the incidentals that give the pictures. In our barracks our hammocks swing side by side in double rows down the dormitory. To check the spread of colds and contagious diseases, the hospital authorities installed movable cotton curtains, which each night are easily adjusted between the heads of the hammocks. These "sneeze curtains," as they were immediately dubbed, very soon had an appreciable effect on the sickness lists of the regiments.

Happy is the sense of humor of the sailor. Several times each week we are inspected for indications of measles or scarlet fever. As the first sign is a rash on the stomach, it is here that we are inspected. There is a cry by whoever first sees the visiting surgeon, of "Attention!" then comes the word, "Belly inspection," and

we fall into line, and with our blouses and shirts pulled up above our breeches march past the doctor. It was a Texan who, with a fine disregard for the majesty of our gold-striped surgeon, secured from the clothing dépôt a paper stencil, such as we use to mark our clothing, and with black paint lettered his bare stomach with "Good-morning, doctor." There are times when even an officer laughs.

All Texas has certainly enlisted in the Navy, and as our average age is below the draft age, it suggests even to the casual that the spirit of the Alamo goes marching on. Tall and lean, they come from Texas towns, villages, and the open plains. All speak with the rich accent of the South, but most of all they are distinguished by their native manners, which seem to be invariably present. Few of them have ever seen a boat, but all of

them are eager to leave their native element and become sailors. They are a splendid class of men, a type that seems to exemplify the ideal American.

Among the men who were directly under me in the regiment was a short sandy fellow who, I learned, had spent a number of years as a sailor on West Coast freighters. Twice shipwrecked, he had finally retired from seafaring to the less tempestuous occupation of a gold-prospector in Alaska. On a periodic trip to a near-by town he had learned that the country was at war, and without stopping to dispose of his claims, — which held greater possibilities of wealth with every telling, — he hurried to the States and enlisted in the Navy. His chief desire while on the station was to climb one of the four-hundred-foot radio towers and perform a handspring on the top; a desire, happily for

life and limb, never to be gratified. As it was, his leisure time was completely filled by embroidery and the weaving of mats and fringes from rope-ends.

In the same barracks slept a young ex-minister of the Gospel, whose slight figure and quiet manner contrasted with the rugged physique and picturesque speech of the gold-prospector. They were both willing workers, and a friendship sprang up between them, for each found in the other qualities for wonder and admiration. I never heard the history of the minister, but there was in the intensity of his patriotism a promise for his future.

Many of the men were married, and on Wednesday afternoons, which were set apart for visitors, wives and children were much in evidence. One of the men, a dark boyish-looking fellow, with fine wide-set eyes and constantly smiling mouth, had

particularly attracted me by his quiet willingness. He had been a motor expert in one of the big automobile factories at Detroit, and threw up a high-pay job to join the Navy. One Wednesday afternoon he proudly introduced me to his wife and three-year-old daughter. Later, the wife told me of her pride in her husband's enlistment and her satisfaction in having been able to find a good position for herself in order to keep up the earning capacity of the family in his absence.

I was listening one morning to a fellow company commander drilling his company in the street before their barracks. The men were listless, and there was absent from the drill the smart precision that instantly identifies the drill-work of a sailor. Without long patience he finally halted his men, and in a few short sentences demanded their attention. One sentence in

particular I shall never forget, for it is a crystallization of the spirit of the Station.

"Don't just do your bit," he said; "the men on this station do their best."

There is another phrase that is in a sense our motto. It is, "For the good of the ship." Landlubbers though we are, we are taught by our captain to consider our camp as a ship in which we must take a true sailor's pride, whose reputation is entrusted to us, a sacred thing. All our speech must be nautical, our life is nautical, and although we live on land, our floor is our deck; when on the station, we are on board ship; and to step outside the gate is to "go ashore." For the good of the ship we are taught that the Navy in general, and our station in particular, are judged by our behavior and appearance. To go on liberty requires personal cleanliness; to remain on liberty demands ex-

emplary behavior. It is a single but an inclusive creed, that guides the accumulative spirit of youth.

A few weeks ago we passed in review before the Secretary of the Navy. With our regimental colors standing out in a strong cold breeze from the Lake, we formed in the one wide street and swung into line behind our band. I was marching near the head of the column, and as we turned a bend in the road I looked back at the regiment, extended at right angles to the foremost company. Fifteen hundred strong, four abreast, we filled a long half-mile of road. The sky was blue, and the sun heightened the brilliance of white caps and leggins and caught here and there a flash from gray gun-barrels. In the middle of the column, the red bars of the flag made a dash of color, and beside it the blue regimental flag, with its yellow de-

vice of the Aviation, flapped in the breeze. From every regimental street similar columns were emerging. Bands were everywhere playing, the music in wind-torn fragments sounding now and again loud in our ears.

Before the Administration Buildings we finally formed, and for an hour we marched past the reviewing stand. Men from every state in the Union, brought together by a common call, we went past. The great band, massed together, thundered its music. From roofs, flagstaffs, and towers multi-colored signal flags dipped and waved. High against the blue above us was the flag of our country. Here was America, with its answer to the world. Here were the inheritors of Perry, Decatur, Hull, Farragut, and Dewey. Here were men from whose number would come new heroes.

III

THE TRANSPORT

FROM Alaska and the Western islands, from the Pacific slopes, from the great Northwest and Southwest, from the Mississippi Valley, the Gulf States, and the Eastern States, they have congregated; drawn together, forming and reforming into ever-increasing armies, miners and bank clerks, college professors and farmers' sons, these vast legions have been gathered, silently and almost unobserved, into a handful of seaport towns; and from these ports of embarkation America's Army of Liberty, without interruption, passes across three thousand miles of sea to foreign lands. Beyond conception is the number that has been transported; nor has the tide yet reached its height. In the

wonder of their gathering and in the glory of their deeds beyond the seas, perhaps have been unnoticed some aspects of their transit. Impatient hours are their hours of travel across the sea. But to those whose duty it is to insure their safe and speedy passage, they are long hours of anxious expectancy. The description of a single passage across the Atlantic will tell the tale. Be there a thousand or ten thousand within the narrow hull, the general aspects are the same.

The city's streets reflected the withering heat of early August, and that heat, on a certain August morning, was the city's chief concern. As I passed down through the cañon walls of buildings, I felt a certain resentment that these millions of people were taking up their daily labors apparently unmoved by the vast

emigration that passed almost unnoticed before them. I was proud to be a participant in this mighty movement, and yet I was envious of these busy people, envious of the uninterrupted even tenor of their lives.

There was a slight coolness on the river, but beyond the portal of the ferry came again the heat of pavements and the dry hot smells of city streets. Long rows of buildings stretched north along the river, and above the roofs here and there towered high sparless masts and huge funnels painted in strange bands of color, emitting thin wisps of smoke or steam which rose almost perpendicularly into the air. Along the rough pavement passed an interminable procession of rumbling trucks piled high with great boxes stenciled with addresses over-seas. Soldiers and sailors moved along the sidewalk.

There was a restless but ordered sense of activity.

Beyond the guarded gates to one of the nearest piers the steel shed-like building, which enclosed the dock-ends and extended its two-story projections out along each pier, opened wide black doorways. Through them electric trucks passed in and out from the yards crowded with freight to the dark interior.

Inside the building was the same orderly confusion. Up to the high ceiling against every wall was piled an infinite variety of boxed, baled, and crated material: wagons, gun-carriages, aeroplanes and caissons, provisions of every description, medical and commissary supplies, lumber, canvas, rope and wire, barrels, casks, and metal cylinders of fluid. Between the barricades of freight, and almost indistinct in the gloom to sun-dazed

eyes, a long line of soldiers stretched far down the building, and beyond a distant corner out on the enclosed pier to the gangways to the ship. They were hot, dirty, and tired with long hours of railway travel, and they moved forward in slow advances of ten or a dozen feet, resting their packs, meanwhile, on the concrete floor and leaning on the polished blue barrels of their rifles. Bronzed with their months of training, their dark faces offered little contrast to the rakish service caps of khaki or the drab of service uniforms. They were tired, but their discipline was unbroken, and there was a noticeable gayety in the ranks and the spirit of a holiday already at hand.

Here a regiment of pioneers, weather-beaten faces making dark contrast to straight blue eyes and sun-faded hair. Matching them in appearance was a regi-

ment of city-bred, whose recently broadened shoulders swung easily beneath the heavy packs. Glistening with rivulets of sweat, the black faces of the negro companies responded to every diversion with instant smiles and laughter. Among the men passed and repassed officers in smart inconspicuous uniforms. They were young, for the most part, but here and there were older faces.

The doors of the pier shone with sunlight that filtered down between the pier-shed and the high side of the waiting transport. At each door the narrow gangway ascended sharply to the ship's side. At two gangways the troops were embarking; at the others stevedores were loading supplies and freight.

There was no view of the vessel, only glimpses of plates of rivet-studded steel through square sunlit openings — steel at

this door painted a sky-blue, and at the next door and the door beyond in slanting stripes of black and white camouflage. There was a smell of salt water in the air and a reminiscent tang of other seafaring days in a huge coil of tarred hawser.

Beyond the steep ascent of the gangway there was light and a sudden sense of heat. Like a mighty building the sides of the transport lifted high against the roof of the dock-shed and extended from the head of the basin to the river at the far end. Abaft the forward cargo-deck, the superstructure rose deck on deck to the culminating sweep of the bridge, full sixty feet above the greasy water of the slip; and above the cargo-deck the foremast and the mainmast rose high against the blue sky, dwarfing the stocky kingheads which directed the long cargo booms. Across the face of the ship the blue, white,

black, and gray camouflage shattered the otherwise orderly outline, giving to the vessel the fantastic appearance of some gayly painted plaything of a giant.

In the shadows of the decks, white-clad officers directed the chaos of the embarkation; and up the gangways and down the black hatches in the deck two interminable files of soldiers issued like brown ropes from the doorways of the pier and smoothly slid across the narrow strip of water, to be coiled away somewhere in the caverns below the decks.

A dozen women in cool blue Red Cross uniforms mingled with the crowd. Y.M.C.A. workers busily offered their final services. Trunks and boxes, officers' baggage, came over the side and were snatched off by perspiring men and hurried below. Everywhere were ceaseless activity, heat, the confused sounds of

many voices, and the smells of the ship, the water, and sweating bodies.

The embarkation was completed, and the long tan lines that for seeming hours had mounted steadily the slender gangways had terminated in the steel decks below. We lunched in the once richly decorated saloon where men and women had gayly gathered in long voyages to the distant Orient. But to-day the central table was lined with naval officers, and on either side, at other tables, sat the several hundred army officers who were accompanying us. In the soldiers' quarters galley-fires had been long lighted and dinner was being rapidly served to the men. With cup and tin plate in hand, they passed in line before the serving-tables, then scattered about the decks and voraciously devoured their first meal on shipboard.

All afternoon the loading of baggage

and supplies was continued. Everywhere about the decks the soldiers wandered, examining their new surroundings or clustering about boxes and hatch-covers to write last letters before departure. Night came. Far across the river a myriad lights gleamed like faint stars against the soft sky. From the darkening river rose the voices of passing vessels, ferries calling out to each other in the growing dusk, deep resonant whistles of ocean vessels and the raucous cries of tugboats. Below decks on the transport a piano dominated all local sounds with the staccato metallic notes of the latest music-hall melodies. About the piano a hundred soldiers gathered in a hollow circle, in which two negro soldiers, streaming with sweat, clogged violently, with white flashes of smiles and clapping hands. From the roofs of the dock-sheds bright flood-lights illuminated

the transport with an unreal daylight, and far above their glare, in the still hot roof of the sky, faint stars shone with a pale white luster.

It was midnight. Driven by the intense heat from below decks, the sleeping soldiers incrusted every level surface of the ship. On every square foot of deck, on lifeboats, on life-rafts and piles of still unstowed baggage, on booms, hatch-covers, and gratings, they flung their bodies in sleep. Upturned to the glaring lights and the stars beyond, white faces lay as on some strange field of battle. Here and there half-naked bodies turned or twisted heavily. Broad chests rose and fell in even breathing; bare feet extended stark and white against the deck. A man with a dark mustache across his lip cried out a sharp incoherent sentence of foreign words. Beside him a tall young man with

clean-cut, boyish features tossed restlessly. As he shifted his weary body, his arm fell across the sleeping man beside him. I watched the arm unconsciously and almost tenderly tighten about the stolid figure, and then, as the touch brought back some far memory to his dreams, I saw his body relax, the fitful tossing ceased, and he sank into tired sleep.

It is late afternoon of the second day. For almost twenty-four hours we have been ready, awaiting the word which would send us on our way. During these long hours the soldiers swarmed restlessly about the ship. At frequent intervals the army band blared noisily popular patriotic airs, and the men roared out the ringing choruses in appreciation. But now there are certain signs which to an observing eye indicate nearing departure.

The pilot, a young man with a jaunty black-and-white checked cap, is on the bridge chatting with the captain. Quietly, all but two of the hawsers have been cast off, and all but one gangway have been lowered away from the side. A vibration trembling deep within the great ship indicates that our engines are turning over. That test alone is indicative. The wail of our siren rises loud above the roofs, and now every man realizes that the long journey is at hand. There is a noticeable quiet.

Four tugs, with much churning of green water, puff noisily into the slip and fasten like leeches against our bow and stern. Soldiers crowd the rails. Every one is on deck. From the upper deck, directly below the bridge, where I am standing with several of the ship's officers, I watch with dull emotion these last material sever-

ings from a land that holds all that is life to me.

Bells jangle deep in the engine-room. The tugs surge against the ship. Suddenly I become conscious that we are moving. With my eye I line up a deck-stanchion with a mark on the dock-shed. The cheering becomes general, a wild triumphant tumult of sound, a roaring of these thousands of American voices.

The dock-sheds are deserted. No answering cheers meet our ears. From a doorway appears a single Irish stevedore, who waves his arms to us. All the cheering instantly focuses on him; he becomes to us America, and the roar of triumphant farewell swells up from the packed decks.

Slowly we slide past the dock and out into the stream. On the forward deck the army band smashes into the chorus of "Over There." Instantly the voices re-

spond. It is tremendous, and there is a lump in my throat and tears of emotion stand in my eyes.

A cool breeze sweeps up the river. Piled high in lofty towers and pinnacles, the great city rises from the blue water, a gleaming silhouette against the sky. About its feet innumerable wharves, like extended fingers of a giant hand, clutch the water. A ferry-boat crowded with returning workers slides past us; there is a flutter of handkerchiefs from its decks. The band strikes up the "Star-Spangled Banner." Slowly we glide down the river, our decks massed with khaki-clad soldiers. The band plays continuously and the men join in every chorus, volleys of cheers drowning the music as ferries and pleasure vessels pass us. The long pile of gleaming buildings mounting to a single crag of white drops behind and we glide

slowly past the green park at the island's point. Against the clear sky the gray cobwebs of the bridges stand out in delicate tracery. Ferries and excursion boats pass close to us, and upturned women's faces send us a last farewell.

From the after gun-deck I watch the towers darken in the soft evening light and sink slowly into the horizon. In the widening bay a great argosy rides at anchor. There are graceful sailing ships of other days, rejuvenated to begin a new life of usefulness. There are steel cargo-carriers, stolid honest burghers of the sea, strangely bedizened in their mad dress of camouflage; and between them dart the smart gray patrol boats.

Gray green, the massive figure of Liberty seems to pass us. Behind her the distant shore lies low on the horizon. The sun dips behind it and is gone. With arm

uplifted the symbolic goddess seems to tender us a silent benediction.

We pass the Narrows and steam slowly through the passage in the great steel net that guards the harbor. On either hand, behind the soft green hills, must lie the guns that guard the sea-gate to the city. At last, the open sea!

The channel buoys drop behind us and suddenly I am conscious that the land has sunk below the horizon. Night begins to close down rapidly on the darkening sea. There is a steady whirring far above, and out of the sky appears a sea-plane that has come to escort us. Ahead, another strange shape looms in the sky, a silvery cigar almost invisible against the gray. A minute later it passes over us and our decks are white upturned faces. From the left a long rakish craft climbs over the horizon, its graceful sides and low funnels patterned

with converging stripes of white and black. Behind the destroyer is the gray bulk of a tall-stacked cruiser. A mile farther a submarine awash falls in on our right. Sky and sea merge slowly into night, and in the deepening dusk the escorting ships become phantom shapes that the eye must strain to see. Our long voyage is begun.

Morning came with dazzling sunshine and a calm blue sea. On right and left the cruiser and destroyer flanked our course. The submarine, sea-plane, and dirigible had disappeared. At noon I began my new duties as Junior Watch-Officer, and took my first of many four-hour watches on the port wing of the bridge.

The transport bore an enviable history. She was well armed, and her officers displayed unconsciously in their bearing the training which characterizes the Ameri-

can naval officer and places him in the enviable position which he holds to-day. The captain, a graduate of the Naval Academy, who had since continuously followed his profession in the regular navy in practically every quarter of the globe, possessed in a high degree those qualifications of professional ability and courtly personality which almost invariably stamp our naval officers. Among the other officers were many who had joined the Reserve Force on the outbreak of the war, men whose long experience on merchant vessels qualified them highly to perform their present invaluable service.

Early in the afternoon faint smears of light smoke edged the horizon, and a few minutes later the funnels of the convoy poked up above it. An hour later we were in the midst. Gathered from unnamed ports, these unnamed vessels met

on a definite square mile or so of ocean known only to their commanders. Fantastically marked with camouflage of various colors, with our escorting cruisers and destroyers circling about us, we made our picturesque formation and began our united progress.

It may be pertinent at this point to explain that the true purpose of camouflage is not, as is popularly supposed, to render the ship invisible, but rather, by various arrangements of converging bands of colors, does it seek to conceal the relative direction or "bearing" of the ship from enemy vessels which may sight it. So successful is this effect, that I have several times found it necessary to study carefully a vessel, to determine its actual direction; and of the vessels in our convoy one repeatedly gave us trouble, due to the fact that she constantly seemed to be fall-

ing off an undeterminable number of points from her actual course.

For four days the heat of a cloudless midsummer sky beat down upon the ship. With the breeze behind us, the movement of air was neutralized and we seemed to pass steadily through an intense calm. At night many of the soldiers slept on deck, and the long promenades were almost impassable with sleeping bodies. Below decks, by day, the soldiers were rapidly accustoming themselves to their new quarters. Meals were served with clock-like regularity to appease appetites sharpened by sea air. Daily the band played a concert on the deck, and the other ships of the convoy were a never-failing source of interest. All the day the men basked in the sunshine. It was to the majority of them a long-desired rest after their weeks of arduous training.

On the fifth day a hazy sky and rapidly moving gray clouds on the horizon gave promise of a change. By sunset the sky was dark with black clouds, and as day departed, an indescribable blackness settled over the ocean. Nowhere was sky or sea clearly discernible, except along the northern horizon, where a pale band of lemon light separated the pall above from the lead-gray of the water and seemed to let in across the sea a heavy ray of light, such as might shine beneath the lowered curtain of a window in a darkened room. Against this clear bar of light the ships of the convoy on our port beam, in black silhouette, perched on the top of the horizon from which the ocean, like a blank wall, seemed vertically to descend. Now and then came the rumble of thunder from the south, where against the complete darkness of the sky the lightning

fell from low-lying clouds in straight smooth liquid plunges to the sea.

At eight I took my watch on the port wing of the bridge. From my high prospect the bow of the ship was but indistinctly visible; aft, all was engulfed in darkness. The sea was smooth, but the impending storm was appalling. On clear nights it is none too easy to keep formation in a convoy, for, as a necessary protection against submarine attack, all lights are extinguished or totally obscured from sunset until dawn; but on such a night the danger of collision was immeasurably increased. In half an hour the lightning became incessant, and showed on every quarter of the horizon. Not the traditional jagged flashes, but smooth, falling columns of fire that seemed to pour from the clouds as molten steel is poured from the tapped hearth. Suddenly, the

rain began — rain so dense that it obscured wholly whatever the darkness had left visible. Blotted out instantly were our companion ships, the incessant lightning showing only a falling curtain of silver threads, behind which my companions on the bridge seemed to move as vivid black and white figures projected on the screen by a cinematograph.

One hour later there was a brief respite, and in the abrupt relief, at each lightning flash, I could dimly see the black forms of our sister ships plunging evenly on the long swells. Our formation was still maintained and all was well. I was soaked through to the skin, but the air was warm, and the heavy coolness of saturated clothing compensated for the fatiguing heat of previous days.

At intervals the rain fell with even greater violence; and at midnight, when

my watch was at an end, I left the bridge and groped my way below to my cabin with infinite relief.

Sunday dawned bright and cool, a heavy brilliant blue sea rolling in deep valleys and high mountains of sparkling water, the highest peaks slashed into flying spray by the knifeblade of a strong northeast wind. Against the blue sky cottony clouds tore like clippers before the wind; and over the moving surface of the sea the ships of the convoy, like gayly garbed ladies of the chorus, in their fantastic camouflage, pitched and rolled, taking now and then a flood of green water over the bow, which poured aft and spouted in cascades from the decks, then settling deep by the stern, with a clear sight under the forefoot. By night the sea had somewhat moderated — a deep ultramarine sea flecked with foam, and

above it a pale sky of delicious blue, across which heavy pink clouds sailed slowly.

The soldiers stood the ordeal well, but the motion of the ship did not pass unnoticed and there were not a few cases of violent seasickness. For the ship's officers and crew the storm was a mere detail in a routine in which storms and submarine warnings had become almost monotonous. There was a kind of fine fatalism in their attitude. To be sure, the submarine danger was at that time particularly acute, and one officer had left two ships torpedoed beneath him; but the realization that no precaution or safeguard was being neglected, and that, despite occasional sinkings scored by submarines, the Germans were playing a losing hand, kept confidence up to a high degree.

Too much cannot be said to the credit

of the reserve officers of the transport service for the efficient service they perform. Many have voluntarily left positions of command on smaller merchantmen or passenger ships, to accept gladly the more arduous war-service in subordinate positions and at a material reduction in compensation. Back and forth, from continent to continent, they are transporting our army, running their zigzag courses in darkened convoys, ever ready to show their heels to the lurking foe, or, if necessary, to meet him face to face with steel from well-manned guns and the rocking blasts of depth-charges cast in the sea. Their hours are long; their recreation negligible; I never have heard a word of complaint from their lips.

Just aft of the mainmast, on the forward freight-deck, the superstructure of the ship rises abruptly a full three decks

to the bridge, where I stood my watches. From side to side, across the beam of the ship, the bridge extends, a long broad promenade inclosed in the center about the wheel and binnacle, and housed over on each end to protect the watch-officers from the weather. Beside the binnacle, which holds the compass, are the telegraphs or engine-room signals, by which the speed of the ship is regulated; and here, in fact, are the eyes and the brain-center of the vessel. From the starboard bridge the senior watch-officer gives his orders to the quartermaster at the wheel, and maintains a strict lookout for whatever of importance may appear on the surrounding sea. On the port side the junior watch-officer also scours the sea and at regular intervals inspects the ship, and performs such other duties as the senior watch-officer may put upon him.

Behind the bridge is the chart-house, where the navigating officer keeps his charts, astronomical instruments, and chronometers. And above is the signal-bridge, where the signalmen flicker their red and yellow flags in hurried words and sentences to other ships, or hoist aloft the gay, multicolored alphabet flags of the International Code by which coded messages are transmitted. Here too is the blinker by which in peaceful waters night-messages are flashed in dots and dashes of light; and, above all, the fingers of the wireless hold the vessel in close communication with the shore and with a wide radius of vessel-dotted sea.

The starboard wing of the bridge is held by the senior officer of the watch, and it is here that the captain and the other officers of the ship may be frequently seen. My station was on the port wing where,

by day or night, at dawn or sunset, I watched the unending beauty of sky and sea and the long line of our flanking convoy.

"Smoke on the horizon!" With his glass the captain studied the thin wisp that faintly smeared the pale blue. Incredibly soon the stacks showed above the horizon. The navigating officer joined me. "She's a big one," he commented. Two other ships on either side of the first became visible. Rapidly their hulls came up, the course west and passing a few miles to the south of us.

Like huge race-horses, they came steadily on, spun smoke trailing behind them. The huge liner towered above her companions, but all were maintaining an equally high speed.

"She can carry ten thousand men. Think of it!" said the navigator.

For a moment I too was staggered at the thought; and then, as my eyes swept the vast heaving expanse of sea, the great vessel became a toy that floated there, a chip with its puny load. Despite the greatest feats of human ingenuity the sea remains incomparable, vast, unconquerable.

"Man marks the earth with ruin — his control
Stops with the shore."

Already the great ship was a speck sinking below the horizon.

By night I saw Polaris high on the left dimmed by the multitude of surrounding stars. Ahead, rising from the sea, in the brief hours before the dawn, came Venus and Jupiter, like liquid drops of silver flame. Behind the swinging masts Orion extended his mighty length, and above him, far above the masts, the glittering Pleiades shone like some rare jeweled de-

sign of Da Vinci pinned to the silken fabric of the night.

In the strange solitude of these long night hours, and in a silence broken only by the sound of the sea swirling and foaming past our sides, with its brilliant wake of phosphorescent light, or by the sudden shrill of the boatswain's pipe and the heavy footfalls of the changing watch, my thoughts would wander to the peace and simple happiness of all that we were leaving behind us; of the unknown future that was awaiting us; of the hopes and fears of those thousands who slept almost within hand-touch within the thin steel walls; and then, with my eyes aching to pierce the night, to discern the black form of our convoy or to catch the white rushing path of a torpedo that might suddenly challenge our way, my thoughts would center on the work at hand and on

the submarine that might even now be trying to pierce the same surrounding night with its single eye. Then each breaking crest became a thing of suspicion, and I was fascinated and buoyant under the still suspense.

At two-hour intervals I inspected the great vessel from stem to stern. Here in the slow lifting and sinking of the bow there was a noise of parted waters. Everywhere watchers scanned the sea, silent sentries paced, prostrate sleepers encumbered the decks. There was eternal vigilance and complete oblivion. Far down in the engine-room sounded the mighty movement of the engines; their tremor pulsed the ship with life.

In the evenings there were movies in the ward-room. On a sheet fastened against the forward bulkhead, the Y.M.C.A. projector cast the reeling com-

edy or tragedy — familiar pictures from a land that was home: a flash of American rural scenes or a crowded street. It was home — our United States. How absorbed we became in the incident-crowded skein of some inconsequential and half-baked scenario! Forgotten for the moment was our present environment.

From the dark, tobacco-rifted room I groped to the deck to go on my watch. My eyes were dulled for the moment; then, as they pierced the clear night darkness and I saw the sea and the stars and the convoy, the magnitude of this great mid-Atlantic drama would burst upon me. Here was a mightier moving-picture than even the imagination could conceive, here was the most tremendous setting, here the actual dangers. Who knew what heroes might be among us an hour hence?

The destroyers are with us. Out of the

black night they came straight to the meeting place. The soft graying of night found them racing beside us. At sunrise the soldiers crowded the rails and watched, fascinated, the strangely painted slender vessels half smothered in the seas, shaking white torrents from their dipping bows, rolling and pitching with tremendous motion. They are our protection. We feel strangely safe under their vigilant escort.

The white church flag, with blue cross, fluttered against a gray sky. From the bridge I could hear now and then the words of the chaplain, words of God and Country and Liberty. The soldiers surrounded him. The bandmaster lifted his baton. "Onward, Christian Soldiers." The music of brass was lost in the music of deep voices:

"Onward, Christian Soldiers."

It was late morning. From a dozen lookouts within a few seconds had come the cry of "Land!" On the far horizon for a little space the movement of the line of sky and sea seemed stilled; a low green-gray thread rested along the waters. Men crowded forward. They clung to the shrouds and climbed to every point of vantage. The green line whitened into cliffs, and through the glass appeared the slender white column of a lighthouse.

The band is on deck. It has played the "Star-Spangled Banner." There is a moment of silence; and then, with a crash of brazen instruments, the "Marseillaise" begins. It is France!

The sails of fishing vessels dot the horizon. White bold cliffs lift higher; promontories jut seaward. A sea-going tug passes close to us, guns mounted fore-and-aft and racks of depth-charges on her fantail.

From the peak a flag of vertical bars of blue, white, and red greets our eyes. Sailors in red-tufted white hats wave to us.

Now we can see green fields mounting slowly behind the white cliffs. As we near land other lighthouses appear, and now I can plainly see a ruined castle with gray unroofed walls. We are moving slowly in column through the bold entrance to the harbor. Of a sudden appears the city, cast into the circling hillside; gray buildings with blue slate roofs; the white outlying walls of green-embowered châteaux; and above the still dark water of the harbor, the massive walls of ancient fortifications, with turrets and low towers.

The sky is very blue, the harbor is alive with vessels. The anchor-chain roars through the hawse-pipe. We are swinging slowly with the tide.

"We are over, over there!"

IV

THE FREIGHT CONVOY

We are moored in midstream beside the collier. On either hand the river surges in the swift ebb of the tide, a broad expanse of water tawny with mud. Between the gray side of the yacht and the camouflaged steel plates of the collier — launched some eight months ago near Cleveland — the water runs like a millrace and roars ominously, pushing out the bow of the yacht against the tautened lines which hold her to the collier. Beyond the yellow water the low green shores of France fade in the gray mist, and a fine rain is falling. There is a rumble of winches; from the black caverns of the collier a great bucket of coal swings high in the air and dumps on the once immaculate deck of the yacht.

Down it swings again into the electric-lighted gloom where negro stevedores in Army drab, from far-away Norfolk and Charlestown, shovel in the coal. On the decks of the yacht the crew, blackened with dust from head to foot, pass down the coal to the fast-filling bunkers. For five hours they have labored unceasingly; by ten to-night the coal will be aboard and the bunkers trimmed. Yesterday we brought in the incoming convoy, to-day we coal, to-morrow we are off again.

At ten we cast off from the collier and stood down the river to meet the outgoing convoy at the mouth. The clouds have cleared and there are dim stars in the distant sky. It is nearly dawn. Against the black shadow of the shore the lighthouses shine like planets, one with a clear emerald gleam far out at sea. At the entrance to the harbor the long white rays of

searchlights probe the darkness, and beyond the dark outline of the breakwater are occasional yellow lights of windows in the town. But in the east, where the river widens into a broad roadstead, a glittering constellation gleams along the water, reaching almost from shore to shore. Here the great argosy of merchantmen rides to the flood. Here are the steel carriers laden with the vast stores that keep in motion our machine of war. Here also is the fleet of emptied freighters that we will escort a few hours later out to sea. Their lights glimmer tranquilly as the white searchlights sweep the entrance.

The sky pales perceptibly in the east. From the town a bell strikes the hour of five. I am on the bridge, and as I count the strokes I think that it is an hour before midnight at home. In the breaking day a French patrol boat comes out from

behind the mole and passes us on her way down the channel. Rapidly the clouds break into flame and a cold, clear breeze comes in from the sea. The ancient town becomes visible in the curve of the shore, the spires of the churches, the dark bulk of the dirigible shed, and, toward the sea, the high white summer homes of the newer part of the town along the cliff.

In the great semicircle of the French coast which swings from Brest to the Spanish line are many harbors such as this, harbors whose names sound frequently in the early history of our nation, and whose names bear new significance in its latest history of to-day. Nantes recalls the Ranger and John Paul Jones; Quiberon Bay, a few miles north of it, is memorable for that first salute to the Stars and Stripes by a foreign nation, when the guns of Admiral Le Motte

Piquet's ships gave it recognition. There is Brest, rich in memories of our first great seaman, and there is L'Orient where the Bonhomme Richard sailed out on her memorable cruise that ended with her engagement with the Serapis off Flamborough Head.

To-day the names of Brest, Nantes, L'Orient, Bordeaux, and Bayonne are forming new associations. Waters that in the lives of the oldest inhabitants have seen only the fleets of fishermen and an occasional steamship are to-day crowded with the shipping of the Allied world. On a coast where the American flag found its first recognition by a French admiral, it is to-day recognized at a thousand mastheads at every port. Great wharves have sprung up about the harbors and along the rivers. American merchantmen, convoyed by American converted yachts and

destroyers, discharge American cargoes for American armies overseas. The flag has come to its own again.

It is day. In the bright sunshine almost a hundred ships swing slowly at their anchor chains, a vast floating island of steel hulls, forested with slim, sparless masts and faintly smoking stacks. Our anchor is lifted and the chain rumbles up through the hawse-pipe. Slowly we steam past a wide mile of vessels to our position.

Here are the flags of the nations of the world, but by far most numerous are the Stars and Stripes. The red flag of the English merchantman is much in evidence, and so are the crosses of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway and the tri-color of France. From a big freighter flies the single star of Cuba. The red sun of Japan and the green and yellow ensign of Brazil snap smartly in the breeze. A few of the

freighters are painted a leaden gray, but for the most part they are gay with camouflage. The spattered effects of the earlier days are now replaced by broad bands of flat colors. Black, white, blue, and gray are the favorites, slanting to the bow or stern and carried across life-rafts, boats, superstructures, and funnels. Even the motor trucks on the deck of a big American are included in the color plan. Some appear to be sinking by the head, others at a distance seem each to be several vessels. It is a fancy dress carnival, a kaleidoscope of color. One and all they are of heavy and ugly lines. On forward and after decks the masts seem designed only to lift the cargo booms and spread the wireless. They are broad of beam, monstrous, ungainly. The oil burners are even more unshiplike, for a single small funnel is substituted for the balanced stacks of

the coal-burners. Fore and aft on the gun-decks the long tubes of the guns point out over bow and stern. Yankee gun crews, baggy blue trousers slapping in the breeze, stand beside them and watch us pass. Blue-clad officers peer down at us from the bridges. Aloft, hoists of gay signal flags, red, yellow, white, and blue, flutter like confetti in the air. From signal bridges bluejackets are sending semaphore signals with red and yellow flags. A big American ocean-going tug churns through the fleet. On our right is a French mine-layer, long rows of mines along her deck. Fast motor boats slide in and out among the vessels. Above, like dragon-flies, three seaplanes circle, the droning snarl of their motors coming in sudden bursts of sound along the wind.

The outward-bound convoy of empty freighters is ready. Bursts of steam from

bows indicate that anchor engines are lifting the big mud-hooks from the harbor's floor. One by one the ships steam slowly out of the harbor; converted yachts and small French destroyers on either side. Out where the entrance broadens to the open sea a big kite balloon tugs at the small steamer far beneath it, and seems to drag it by a slender cord of steel.

As we pass the farthest channel buoy a barque stands in from the sea and passes us. The centuries meet. Trim and graceful, with clean-cut lines and tapering masts and spars, the ship seems to rush through the green water, a white bone in her teeth, and her canvas bellying like clouds before the wind. Along her side is painted a broad white band broken at regular intervals with squares of black simulating the gun-ports of a fighting ship. She might belong to the fleet of

Nelson or of Villeneuve; a century has worked no changes in the sea or the background of the low French coast. Then my eyes turn to the long line of stout steel freighters, wisps of smoke streaking from their funnels against the sky, heavily plodding into a head sea and wind. Gone is the beauty and elegance of wooden hull and sky-flung sails.

Each trip that we make is for the most part exactly like the others. From some crowded harbor we escort a fleet of empty freighters far out beyond the Bay of Biscay. Here, beyond the active submarine zone the yachts and small French patrol boats leave the convoy and a few hours later, or perhaps a day or night, we meet an incoming convoy on some prearranged square mile of the Atlantic Ocean and escort it to the port. Every hour is filled with unceasing vigilance; no chance is

taken; the safe delivery of our charge is of paramount importance. No matter what conditions of weather prevail the work goes on. In fog and rain, in high seas and in the teeth of northwest gales, the little vessels perform their unremitting duty. By day the convoys move forward along a base course, zigzagging to the right or left of it, now ten degrees, now fifteen, now twenty or thirty, according to a prearranged plan, with the precision of a company of well-drilled infantry. In front, in the rear, and on the flanks the escorting yachts and destroyers execute their individual zigzags to cover every exposed part of the convoy. By this system of zigzag the accurate aiming of a torpedo by a submarine is rendered difficult, for if a periscope is lifted and a bearing of a ship is taken, that ship will probably be headed on another course, with necessa-

rily a different bearing from the submerged submarine by the time the torpedo can be fired. Few are the cases to-day when the submarine actually shows itself by day. The first sight of the periscope may be when it is first lifted at a distance of several miles when the submarine will follow the convoy on a parallel line to determine its bearings and finally will converge towards it at an angle of forty-five degrees on the bow of the convoy. Having determined the bearing and range the submarine will submerge. Only once more will the periscope appear, this time at a distance of about three hundred yards. Then it will be visible only a few seconds; just long enough to take final aim. Difficult to detect in a calm sea, except from the wake which it may create, it is practically invisible in a wind-torn sea slashed with white caps.

From the crow's nest, from the superstructure, and from the bridge a dozen or more pairs of sharp eyes are constantly searching the sea with glasses to detect a sign of the submarine's presence. Like all the converted yachts, we carry a small but efficient battery of high-power guns, capable of doing considerable damage if there is a chance for their use; but it is not on guns that we rely nor are our guns the weapon most feared by the submarine. On the graceful fantail of the yacht, along three short steel racks, lie a number of steel cylinders, of ordinary ash-can size and appearance, ready at a second's notice to be rolled one by one over the stern. Charged each with over three hundred pounds of the highest explosive, these depth charges are controlled by a hydrostatic apparatus to explode at any depth for which they may be set. Within a

radius of fifty to seventy-five yards their impact can destroy a submarine and their effect is noticeable over a wide area. It is this form of weapon, scattered by the yachts and destroyers, according to a system based on the known maneuvering ability of the submarine, that has accomplished most in destroying the menace of the seas.

By night our greatest danger lies not so much in submarine attacks as in collision with vessels of the convoy, the escort, or other passing ships. Not a light is shown; with ports darkened and all illumination even below decks reduced to a minimum, the great convoys and their escorts pursue their ghostlike way. In the blackest nights the compass is the only guide, and with lookouts straining their eyes to pierce the darkness each ship swings steadily on. When the moon is up, even though the

sky is overcast, there is ample light to locate the low, black masses of the ships on the horizon. Such nights are ideal, for they are too dark for probable attack and yet there is enough light by which to see. The bright moonlight requires the same precaution as daylight. Night is the breathing-time for the submarine, and it is then that they come to the surface and, with hatches open, charge their batteries and communicate with one another by wireless. And when caught in this condition the submarine is easy prey.

In the fall and winter months it is almost invariably rough in the Bay of Biscay. Built for quiet steaming along summer shores from port to port the yachts have been required to perform a duty for which they were neither intended nor designed. The yacht to which I am attached bears little resemblance to-day to what it

must have been in the days of peace. Where a crew of twenty or twenty-five once lived, to-day a hundred and twenty-five are quartered. Bunks fill former smoking-room and library. Rough partitions divide the owner's cabin; mahogany and brass and white enamel are buried under half a dozen coats of battle gray. The concussions of depth charges have broken glass and ripped white tiles from bathroom walls. Gun-racks and cutlasses line bulkheads of mahogany. White decks once smooth as velvet are torn and splintered by the wear of a year and a half of bitter service. Aft, where once wicker chairs and gay pillows filled the broad curve of the stern, are guns, steel ammunition chests, and launching tracks heavy with depth charges. In the deep waters of the Bay lie two of her sisters, one rammed at night, another sunk by a

torpedo; a third yacht lies broken on a reef.

I have been particularly interested in the officers and the crew of this little vessel, and I believe they are typical of most of the ships performing this wearying duty; it gives an interesting sidelight on American adaptability. Our Captain, a "two-and-a-half striper," is a regular Navy man and a graduate of the Naval Academy. He is still in his twenties and is receiving this training as a preparatory course to a more important command. The rest of the officers are Reserves, ranging in age from twenty to forty-six, drawn from every part of the country and representing a variety of vocations. One dealt in fire insurance before the war, another was a capitalist; there is a patent lawyer, a college undergraduate, an athletic instructor, an advertising man, a

broker, and a manufacturer. We hail from Massachusetts, New York, Virginia, Minnesota, California, Washington, and Illinois, and here we are, on the Bay of Biscay, and, thanks to the Navy Department and the training it has given us, we are doing the work in hand; not like regulars, perhaps, but still doing our best.

The crew is a fine, enthusiastic aggregation of American youth salted with a generous sprinkling of men who have seen service before the war in the Navy or on merchantmen. "Mac," with a sailor's roll in his wiry legs, knows "no home but the ship" and has been at sea for twenty years, since his first voyage at the age of thirteen. Many of the youngsters are in for a full four-year "hitch" as a part of their education and for a chance to see something of the world. They won't regret it and many will make it their life-

work, for there will be room for the right men in the future Navy of the United States. There is a young coxswain who taught country school in a Kansas village, a quiet little fellow with precise English and an absolute unconcern for seafaring ways. Another youngster, from Boston, is the entertainer of the "glory hold." He has never missed a chance to make a liberty on shore, and invariably returns materially strengthened in his rampant admiration of the places, people, and customs of his native land. "Biarritz is all right," I heard him remark after a visit to that fashionable resort, "but give me Revere Beach for a real place." And there is nothing in all Europe that can compare with his native Boston. It's the same with the rest of them. Everything receives an invidious comparison with the American equivalent and each trip on

shore strengthens their proud Americanism.

But to return to the convoy. There was a heavy sea rolling in over the bar, and outside the bottle-green waves made the yachts and destroyers toss heavily. An hour later, under a dark, clouded sky, the convoy was pitching and rolling in a constantly growing sea, and as night came, wind and driving blasts of fine rain added to the discomfort. I went on the bridge at eight, a perilous climb from the wardroom up over slippery decks and the swaying ladder to the bridge. In the utter blackness the other ships of the convoy and escort had disappeared. There was no light of moon or stars and even a flash of light on any ship was forbidden. Only before the helmsman's face shone the dim slit in the binnacle through which he watched the compass swinging madly on

the gimbles. The sea was black with slashes of dead-white spray running along the wave crests, and as our bow sank into each wave, it cast a white millrace of foam aft along our sides, the ship shuddering heavily at the impact. Over the breast-high canvas along the bridge the wind flowed like rushing water, heavy blasts soaked with spray striking our faces like blows from a flat board. I left the bridge at midnight, but sleep was almost impossible, for the rolling and pitching of the yacht continued with increasing violence.

Day dawned with a low, gray sky and a heaving leaden sea lashed white in the wind, the water streaked with soapy eddies blowing to windward. East and west along our course the convoy staggered on. The formation was broken, but all were accounted for. Still clinging to the outskirts the yachts and destroyers rose and

disappeared between the waves, their smoke streaming back flat from their stacks along the wind. During the morning the lifeboats swung from davits on our upper deck were several times dragged in the water by a heavy roll, and a big sea smashed in the wardroom windows and deluged the officers' quarters with a couple of barrelfuls of water.

The wind dropped somewhat during the afternoon, and by evening the clouds had broken and here and there bright stars flashed for brief moments a promise of better weather to come. The following day dawned with a splendor of gold and rose-stained clouds piled against the east and a clear blue sky above. The sea was rich with the brilliant ultramarine of deep water, and as the sun rose above the clouds the white crests caught a pink tinge from the sunlight. In the clear, cold

air came now and then from the oil-burning freighters invisible wisps of smoke like the strong smell of a smoking kerosene lamp.

With the first tinge of dawn comes one of the most favorable times for a submarine attack — the other being the hour of twilight — for it is possible for a submarine to locate and follow a convoy unobserved during the night and make the attack with the first morning light. With dawn also comes a renewed vigilance on the part of the escort and convoy, outlooks are increased and the sea is thoroughly scanned for a tell-tale slick of oil from a submarine's exhaust; for flocks of birds hovering over refuse cast up from a submarine, or for a chance glimpse of a silvery periscope among the waves.

For a number of days we plodded westward, the convoy in orderly formation

pursuing a constantly varied zigzag, and the escort in front, behind, and on either flank zigzagging more or less independently. Late one afternoon, after an hour of fluttering signal flags and much signaling by semaphore, we parted from the convoy and with the other ships of the escort, and in the soft twilight stood north to the rendezvous of the incoming convoy.

I went on the bridge at four in the morning. It was still night with a dim mist of stars and a jet-black sea heaving in long swells. Behind the wheel the helmsman stood, a shrouded figure in his wind-and-rain suit, the peaked hood drawn over his head. On either wing of the bridge were similarly clad lookouts. Hot coffee and bread had just been brought up from the galley by the messenger. We had picked up the incoming convoy at one and the officer of the deck

pointed out, through our night-glasses, their dark forms like low mounds on the black horizon.

The night watches, on a still night, are filled with a silence that is intensified by the motion of the ship and the soft pressure of the wind. Dawn comes slowly with gray white light that gradually defines the ship and the figures of the watchers on the bridge. Then comes a moment when the other ships become definite. On this particular morning a soft haze filled the air. As the reflected glow of the sun, still below the horizon, caught the eastern clouds, the convoy, a great flotilla of black objects, appeared resting quietly like a flock of gulls on the sea. Then as the dawn brightened a low-voiced whistle on one of the distant vessels broke the stillness, the long and short blasts sounding a signal letter. One by one the others

answered, deep bass voices, melodious, resonant, calling to one another like sea-fowl greeting the day and assuring themselves of the others' presence.

We made our "landfall" on a gray day which gradually brightened, and by afternoon a warm October sun was shining on the green shoal waters of the coast. First appeared a tall white lighthouse, then the thin line of the shore. In the afternoon the wireless reported a submarine eight miles on our starboard beam. A great French dirigible had located it and was following it until the hurrying destroyers and aeroplanes could complete its destruction. With renewed vigilance we continued our way along the broken coast. Out of the mist the aeroplanes, like the wild geese of the north, winged straight across us and were gone. A half-hour later two dirigibles ploughed seaward through the mist.

Twilight. In the dusk the familiar flashes of the lighthouses promised a safe arrival. Slowly, in long formation we stood up the harbor. The rattle and roar of descending anchor chains sounded over the quiet water. Another great convoy of twenty-seven steel cargo ships, laden with food, steel, oil, trucks, ammunition, and general supplies, had reached its destination. Four hours later we began to coal.

I remember on another convoy a night of brilliant stars in a purple sky with frequent squalls of rain that swept across it in the cold gale that blew from the northwest. There was a tremendous sea and the ship rode heavily with a constant torrent of water breaking over her. Suddenly, far ahead, flashed a signal from another yacht of the escort, "Submarine on port bow." In an instant the gongs were clanging below decks and the strident, deep

voices of the howlers were adding to the tumult. Up from below decks the crew swarmed into the sudden chill of the spray-soaked air, tying the lashings of their life-preservers as they ran. I hurried to my position at the depth charges on the fantail, where already the depth-charge crew were loosening the chocks and standing ready to pull the safety keys, slash the lashings, and cast them loose. At the after guns black groups of half-naked men were gathered, faces now and then faintly illumined in the dim glow of the tiny lights on the range dials. A sudden sea — a wall of black water — submerged us to our waists and poured off as the stern lifted heavily, the scupper drains sucking noisily and the remaining water swashing back and forth across the deck. For an hour we stood in readiness. Then came the order to "secure." Dan-

ger, real or speculative, was for the time being past.

Ever since the United States entered the war, the yachts and destroyers of the merchant convoys have played their silent part in the struggle with a submarine enemy. In every kind of weather, month after month, the dull routine of the convoy work goes steadily on. By night, over the wireless, come the undecipherable messages of talking submarines, the air-flung voices of the convoys, and the near or distant "Allo" of distress. "We are being shelled by a submarine," may be the words caught by the wireless operator, or the officer on the bridge may see suddenly the flashing signal of distress of a straggler in his own convoy and realize that the sea-sharks have closed in on their victim. There are days and nights when the wardrooms and the crews' quar-

ters are crowded with the refugees from sinking vessels. There have been abandoned merchantmen with their costly cargoes that have been manned and brought half-sinking into port by crews from the yachts or destroyers. There have been open boats strewn with dead and dying that have been sighted far out on the bleak sea, and dead bloated bodies in life-jackets that have gone bobbing past.

But in spite of every disadvantage, hardship, and discomfort that has ever been known to those who have sought the sea in ships, the officers and men of the American Naval Forces in France have delivered safe to their designated harbors the great and ever-increasing fleets of merchantmen that have kept our battle-line supplied with the sinews of war. Never has the American Navy played a greater and more unostentatious part in

the great game of war. And never has been more truly illustrated the words of Washington, pointing so clearly to the future, "to an active, external commerce the protection of a naval force is indispensable."

V

DESTROYERS

It was a dazzling blue-and-gold morning when I first saw the destroyers. Out of the night they had come. Like land birds they greeted us on the waste of waters, and as we realized the strength of their protection in this submarine-infested sea that bordered the coast of France, we looked down at them from the high decks of the transports with admiration and watched them swing and plunge at headlong speed in a smother of spray, chisel bows dipping under green water, slender masts reeling in wide arcs, camouflaged sides now visible, now lost to view as they caught the swinging seas. They circled us and took their positions, the tiny flag of the United States snapping from their mainmasts.

We felt unutterable comfort in their company.

A few months later I was ordered to destroyer duty; with the anticipation of this new and thrilling service I took my leave from the converted yachts and the great, lazy storeship convoys of the south and proceeded to Brest, where the destroyers of the troopship convoys were based.

Never can I forget that ancient harbor with the old town cast into its green rim, the narrow, high, rock-walled entrance, and the busy water that lay within the breakwater, where lay the great transports and the repair ships and where the destroyers rested like slender slivers of quivering steel side by side in clusters at the great buoys. At night the blinkers trembled like fireflies from a hundred yards, searchlights combed the sky, red and green running lights trembled on the

water, and everywhere were the lights of passing small boats. By day all was activity. In through the narrow entrance came great convoys, liners with decks teeming with khaki-clad armies, brave eyes wonderingly looking down at this distant shore from which so many were never to return, destroyers darting fast through the still waters in escort. And each week departed the outgoing convoys of empty liners, destroyers in escort to return some five days later with other ships and other legions.

There were eight officers on the Benham and a crew of over a hundred men. A thousand some odd was her tonnage, eighteen thousand horse-power, oil-burner, turbine-driven, a lean, graceful arrow with a knife-edged bow and four rakish stacks on her low, wave-washed back. Forward, a single gun graced the

lofty deck; then the towering superstructure of the bridge, and aft of the bridge the sudden drop to a five-foot free board that extended aft like a shaft behind a lance-head to the stern, where Y-gun, Thornycroft throwers, and depth-charge tracks told the story of her duty.

It was late in the afternoon. A great liner of the early nineties, a vessel that a generation ago set new records for speed and luxuriousness, lifted her anchor and stood down the channel. In the center of a group of destroyers we cast off our lines; a sudden churning of water under our stern and we slid out into the clear. Slowly we swung around and headed out of the inner harbor at fifteen knots, only a faint quivering of the thin steel shell indicating the presence of the heavy moving machinery that filled the narrow hull.

There is a monotony in all things, and I

suppose that to the officers and men who had innumerable times steamed out of the harbor with a convoy it was an old story now of small interest. But to me it was each time an adventure, and from the first storeship convoy I accompanied out of the Gironde to the last troopship convoy out of Brest, I always received a thrill of anticipation and a vain hope for the real adventure which meant an actual brush with a submarine.

On this particular trip, bad weather — no worse than much and better than some — gave the interest. It was a yellow evening and the sun finally settled behind thin clouds and flattened on the horizon. The sea was oily with a long, smooth swell that gave the destroyer a slow, heaving motion as we cut the water at a twenty-knot speed. Behind us the high cliffs of Finistère disappeared in evening mist. On

our port beam the darkened transport steamed steadily, silently, and without perceptible movement. Soft stars cautiously appeared like white dust-flecks in the darkening blue.

I climbed down from the bridge and entered the passage to the wardroom where a dim blue light brightened automatically as I shut the outer door. In the wardroom, safe behind closed port shutters, electric lights gleamed against white enameled bulkheads. The ward-room extends athwart ships. It is the living-room and dining-room, a simple white steel cell, furnished with table, chairs, desk, a bookcase, and a couple of divans at either end. Forward, extending amidships, is a narrow passage, on each side of which are the small rooms of the officers, and at the far end is the bathroom, if a single shower deserves the name.

Colored and Philippine mess attendants were setting the table, and soon after we sat down to dinner, the "Captain," a commander in the regular Navy, at the head, and the Mess Treasurer at the foot. There were eight of us on the Benham, a couple more than were required, but all the destroyers carried several extra officers in order that the men might be trained for the new construction building at home. Of the eight, four were graduates of the Naval Academy — as fine fellows as I ever hope to meet anywhere. Three were graduates of the short four months' Annapolis course, in private life a lawyer, a cotton manufacturer, and a student, and hailing originally from Harvard, Yale, and Columbia. I was the eighth. Though I live long I can never forget the splendid type of American manhood these companions represented.

After the dinner was cleared away and the felt cloth was spread on the table, our usual evening began. At eight the deck was relieved and a couple of us left the warmth and light below for a four-hour vigil on the bridge. If the "Duke" and I found one evening free, we invariably played solitaire in heated competition. Wright occasionally afforded music on a mandolin borrowed from the steward, or we read or studied, or more often talked of when the War would end, and how, and home. Such was an evening of relative calm at sea. They were few.

We left our convoy at ten in the evening, and turning to the northwest, proceeded alone to the rendezvous where we should assemble with other destroyers and pick up the incoming convoy. Three great convoys were out at sea and all nearing France. The last great move-

ment of American troops was nearing port.

Day dawned late in a gray sky and disclosed an empty, heaving sea. A gale was rising and the wind, dead ahead of us, was beginning to make our steering difficult, for the light high bow of the destroyer acted like a sail and tended to blow us off our course. By noon a heavy sea was running, great gray suds-streaked ranges of water that poured over us. With a quick, lifting motion our bow reared on each advancing wave and then seemed to sink or rather fall with the breath-taking suddenness of an express elevator. The rolling also had materially increased and we moved from place to place about the deck with difficulty.

Late in the afternoon the sun racing behind a sky of tawny clouds blinked occasionally on a maddened sea. On the bridge a constant deluge of water poured over us;

a good thirty feet we stood above the water-line, and the wind, its violence augmented by our headlong speed, came like knife-blades through each crack or aperture in the bridge. Below decks all was heat, cooking, and the reek of fuel oil; topside all was water and the terrific wind. Just before sunset a huge cross-wave carried away the motor dory. The pace was too fast; we were well ahead of the rendezvous; at dusk we turned our stern to the gale and at eight knots rolled slowly before it. In the course of these few hours we later discovered that we had had much ammunition torn away out of the racks, and just before we turned, another big sea had smashed in our motor sailer. Incidentally, this and the motor dory were our only boats.

The wardroom was awash with about six inches of water that had leaked in

at some place — a dirty flood in which floated cigarette stubs, cigar butts, and matches from capsized ash-trays, a couple of old magazines and the "Duke's" deck of playing-cards. With a five-second cadence the destroyer rolled with a motion that slopped the dirty flood from side to side like a wave. We had racks on the table and the "boys" made an attempt to serve dinner, but it was useless, and after half the food had been mingled with the flood, we tried our luck with cups of soup and bread-crusts.

When the weather is lively there is little going to bed on a destroyer, and on this particular trip, for instance, none of us removed his clothes from port to port. To wash is an absurd experiment. To try to shave is an indication of insanity.

There were eight ships in the incoming convoy. Big fellows they were, all of them.

In the wind-swept void of a night of superlative blackness we picked up the other destroyers of the waiting escort, and at about midnight I suddenly felt a vibration shivering through our slim hull. Out of the lightless night, through a submarine-infested sea, for a distance of three thousand miles these great ships with their priceless cargo of human freight had steered their certain course to the rendezvous, and we, as confident of our position as a man on a familiar street-corner, waited for them on a tiny patch of storm-swept Atlantic, and met them.

I went on the bridge at four in the morning. The increased vibration some hours before told me that we had "made contact" and were moving at increased speed. The officer of the mid-watch pointed out the ships of the convoy through his night-glasses, but for five

minutes I could see nothing until my eyes became accustomed to the darkness. Then, one by one, I discovered the almost indefinable low, black objects ahead and to the right, now vaguely visible, now lost with the motion of the sea. There was not a gleam of light; there was no sound but the roar of the wind behind us.

Another day dawned gray and lifeless. I was wet with salt water, and choked with the reek of back drafts of fuel-oil vapor from the stacks and the smoke of cooking from the galley. Also for two hours I was seasick. Why dwell on that? Happily I have been seasick but four times in all. But it is enough to make me understand many things.

Camouflaged beyond recognition, the transports lunged and lifted wet bows and shook the water from their lower decks. In double lines four wide they

proceeded, destroyers on either flank and behind them, and the smoke of another destroyer far ahead. Running now at twenty-three knots before the gale, there was a sense of speed that I have never elsewhere experienced. A great copper pot of hot, thick, black coffee was brought up to the bridge, and a huge tin cup of it put me on my toes again.

Day was well established, and between breaking, flying clouds now and then showed patches of blue. We were steaming at twenty-seven knots to take position ahead of the convoy. There was the Mongolia, the great transport on which I had come to France. It was the first time I had seen her since. As we tore up behind her I remembered another morning when I came on her bridge at dawn and looking down saw the waiting destroyers dashing about us. A thrill had shivered through

me, a wave of emotion — inwardly I blessed them, and the men crowded at the rail and cheered the destroyers as they rocked past, and wondered how they lived and how such ships could endure.

Rolling and pitching through a smother of flying spray we tore past the two outboard ships of the convoy. Clinging to a stanchion I watched the high, distant decks brown-packed with soldiers. Small part I was playing, but how the realization that I was "among those present" thrilled me that gray morning.

By noon it was gloriously bright and the sea was going down. On the horizon was the smoke of the other convoys. In the wardroom we counted the troop capacity of the various ships of the three convoys, all of which an hour later were in full view at one time — it showed a total of forty-two thousand men. On the

Leviathan alone were probably at least a fifth of all. About thirty destroyers composed the several escorts; destroyers from Brest and a bunch from Queenstown — American destroyers, all. There were about twenty-eight troopships in the three convoys.

Another day and the sun rose in a cloudless sky out of France; as we picked up the familiar shore, the troopships strung out into a long single file, and with destroyers on either side passed through the mine-field and entered the harbor. Overhead two long, yellow dirigibles gave us escort, and a flock of seaplanes soared far up in the sky watching the depths of the blue water.

A coastal convoy of twenty-six freighters was standing out of the harbor as we neared and swung slowly south past the great crags that rise from the sea at the

south. The blue of sky and sea, the flags and camouflage, the number of the vessels, and the faint burst of wind-blown music from military bands on the transport decks, made it a day never to be forgotten.

It was practically the last great convoy, although we dared not even dream that the end would come so soon.

VI

HOMEWARD-BOUND

FIRST to reach the coast of France after the declaration of war, the fleet of converted yachts first sailed for home following the armistice. During the long month following the suspension of hostilities the wide harbor of Brest presented a scene of restless inactivity. The war was ended. The surrender of the German Navy made further sea warfare an impossibility. After months of hard and monotonous sea duty the first thought of almost every man was of home.

Then came the announcement that the yachts were to return, and that they would be followed shortly after by the several torpedo boats and the coal-burning destroyers. For weeks the men had

been sewing the "homeward-bound" pennants; a few days of hectic labor landing depth-charges, Y-guns and ammunition, and taking on board stores, and the little fleet was ready for its thirty-five-hundred-mile voyage.

The yachts had played a very vital part in our naval activities on the coast of France. At the outbreak of the war the relatively few available destroyers were rushed to England, and to the yachts fell the duty of the patrol and escort along the French coast. With the British fleet guarding the gates of the north and the French fleet on similar duty in the Mediterranean, the full burden of the French coast fell to the yachts, and, later, to the destroyers, which were from time to time assigned to these waters, but which were still inadequate numerically even at the close of the war.

Designed for summer seas and short runs between sheltered harbors, these frail pleasure vessels, stripped of their luxurious furnishings and equipped with guns and depth charges, had fought the submarine from the rocky coast of Finistère across the stormy Bay of Biscay south to the Spanish line. Much credit goes unquestionably to the destroyers, but to the yachts belongs credit in perhaps even greater measure because of their physical unfitness for the service they so valiantly performed.

It was a gray morning and frequent rain squalls rode in from the sea on the chilling wind. Piled up from the harbor's edge, rising in row on row of winding streets of slate-roofed, gray-stone buildings, the city terminated in the slender spire of the cathedral. At its feet the ancient fortress guarded the harbor. For

generations the eyes of sailors had seen the city unchanged by passing years; but never in its long history, which began in Roman days, had the eyes of the city gazed out upon such a scene as the harbor presented in these last weeks which followed the war.

Along the sheltering lee of the breakwater, a great fleet of American vessels extended from the shore to the breakwater's end. Here were gathered many of the transports, strangely painted in confusing camouflage of white, gray, blue, black, and green; from great buoys the destroyers, knife-like hulls of steel, their backs bristling with funnels and slender masts, swung in groups like strange water insects. Here, too, were the yachts, graceful despite their shorn bows and overladen decks, aristocrats in battle gray. Beyond the breakwater, in the outer

harbor, were huge liners whose decks so recently had swarmed with khaki-clad legions. Everywhere countless motor launches, manned by blue-clad, white-capped sailors, darted and circled. The harbor was alive with vessels.

Of all the yachts, the Christabel was the smallest, the oldest, and the slowest of the fleet. Yet on her gray funnel a white star, her mark of honor, recalled, to those who remembered, the story of her battle with the German submarine U-56 which, shattered by the Christabel's depth-charges, sought desperate refuge in a Spanish port, where it was promptly interned for the duration of the war. Built in 1893, the Christabel boasted of two hundred and forty-eight tons and a length of one hundred and sixty-four feet over all. For the first year, immediately following her trip across the Atlantic, she

saw continuous service without overhaul or repair. And on that gray morning she was ready for her long return.

I am perhaps most interested in the Christabel because of her brave history and because it was to her that I was assigned for my homeward passage, but the other yachts of the homeward-bound fleet deserve equal mention. In the second division, to which the Christabel was attached, were also the May, the Remlik, and the Wanderer. The first division comprised the Vidette, Corona, Sultana, Emeline, and Nokomis. Both divisions sailed on the same morning and both directed their course to New York by way of the Azores and Bermuda.

There was a sudden burst of cheering from the Bridgeport, the big gray repair ship of the base. Slowly, through the clusters of vessels, the yachts of the first di-

vision stood out of the harbor. One by one they passed through the lane of open water, their crews swarming on the decks, hundred-foot homeward-bound pennants, slender red, white, and blue ribbons, looping and curving on the breeze from the trucks of their mainmasts. From every vessel cheers sped them on their way; signal boys in syncopated semaphore flicked red and yellow words of *bon voyage* from the waiting to the departing; whistles saluted their outgoing.

Two hours later came the signal for the departure of the second division. Slowest of all, the Christabel was to lead our procession. On the long journey it was she who would set the pace. Our moorings were cast off; the bells of the telegraph jangled in the engine-room; on the upper deck forward of the pilot-house I stood with the captain and several of the other

officers. As we gathered way the sinuous pennant on our mainmast snapped smartly along the breeze at right angles to our course. We turned the end of the breakwater. The whaleback of a French submarine passed us and recalled the days that were gone. Slowly we turned to the west.

The harbor, a great circular lake, lies behind the rocky cliffs through which the narrow entrance passes straight to the sea. As we stood down the channel the town slid slowly behind the outjutting cliffs. My thoughts held only pleasant memories of the weeks that I had passed in the shadow of the ancient city, but in my heart was a deeper happiness, and already I began to estimate the probable duration of our passage and anticipate that morning or evening, as it might be, when the low coast of America would rise against the sky of my own country.

Two great vessels were entering the harbor as we passed out to sea. Sleek, in a fresh coat of gray, the Leviathan towered above us. High up above the precipice of her side deck upon deck piled incredibly aloft; and still beyond, the monstrous triple stacks pointed skyward. From her rails hundreds of small white faces peered down on us, and I believe we all felt a pleasure in the thrill of our adventure which became visualized by this absurd comparison.

The entrance widened. On the left great rocks, strange shapes in wave-worn stone, outcropped from the sea like giant bathers around whose bodies showed the ominous white of breaking surf. On the right the high cliff turned northward. Here were the white towers of Saint-Mathieu and beyond, low-lying Ouessant.

It was a gray day, with a heaving dull-green sea and a steady wind from the southwest that heaped an occasional wave over our restless bow. A month's sea voyage is a long prospect and the first day was quickly passed in completing our final preparations. Built primarily for pleasure cruising in smooth waters, the discomforts that were to await us became soon apparent, for by midnight the frequent seas shipped aboard began to percolate through the decks strained by the wear and tear of long months of arduous service, and a fine drip of salt water, impossible to check, soon soaked the officers' cabins and crews' quarters, wetting clothing and bedding, and driving the officers to restless sleep on the pitching deck of the ward-room.

For two days the weather steadily increased, and on the afternoon of the third

day the barometer began to joggle down to depths that augured badly for our progress. Four hundred miles off the coast of Spain in a rising gale may be fun for liners, but as I looked out over the great azimuth of the sea cresting in racing waves, suds-streaked and breaking white into spume that was flung like blizzard gusts of snow before the gale, and watched the slender hulls of our three companions, now lost between the seas, now rising high on a crest, red bilges showing as they rolled, I thought of Gonzalo's remark: "Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground."

Night shut in with a single yellow gleam of light that was extinguished like a candle. Against our frail pilot-house the wind hammered with battering blows. Now and then, as a sea met the Christabel broad on her bow, there was a shock of a

collision, and, if at that instant we were not clinging fast, we were slung helpless across the deck to crash with a mess of other things adrift against the opposite bulkhead. In the half-lee of the pilot-house I stood my watch, deluged by head-long seas thrown up by our bow and flung high above us. Through the darkness of this mad, wet, swinging world I could see now and then the lights of the May on our port beam and the emerald gleam of her starboard running light, and far astern the masthead lights of the Remlik and the Wanderer plunged and lifted, appeared and disappeared, like sea fireflies.

It was about eleven when the quarter-master at the wheel turned and flung to the captain and two of us who were with him in the pilot-house, the pungent sentence, "The wheel 's jammed, Sir." In the half-second which followed I realized with

vivid intensity that extreme peril was at hand. Slowly we swung into the deep trough of the seas and a second later a wave struck us on the beam with a shock that seemed capable of crushing us. The impact was terrific. Then, slowly, the electric lights died low, the glowing filaments suffused a dull pink light, and all was darkness. At the same moment the door of the pilot-house was flung open and on the rush of wind that followed I caught the words of a sailor who was shouting that something in the side of the after-deck house was smashed in, the engine-room was flooding, and the dynamo was under water.

Happily, the steering-gear was cleared by the shock of another sea; we again headed slowly into the gale, and the pumps disposed of an inconvenient couple of tons of sea water. A door and window

in the after-deck house, which the sea had torn away and through which the waves were pouring, were barricaded with mess tables from the crew's galley and once more the electricity made light and signaling and radio communication possible.

In the next two hours other seas tore away the ladder from the main deck to the pilot-house and snatched a motor boat from its lashings and cast it far astern of us. It was a wild, sleepless night, and when in the early morning the barometer began to steady, we thanked fortune that things had been no worse and began to have thoughts of food and sleep.

There is a wild and terrifying majesty in a storm at sea; but I think the aspect of the sea in the several days immediately following is even more impressive. With the moderating of the wind, the rapid succession of the waves lengthened into a

long, unending sequence of mighty swells. Under a brightening sky, through which came fitful bursts of pale sunshine, the leaden ocean seemed to be moving rapidly to the east, great, even, smooth ridges of water stretching from horizon to horizon and following each other like ranks of infantry. Slowly the yachts mounted each swell, dipped over its summit, and slid down into the broad valley beyond. And hour after hour the interminable progression of swells passed beneath us.

At noon each yacht reported to the flagship by hoists of multicolored signal flags the position and the coal and water expended and on hand, and by night the glittering blinker lights on the yardarms spelled in dots and dashes of lights the words of our communications.

In the storm which we had passed through, a quantity of sea water had

seeped into our fresh-water tanks and for the rest of the trip to the Azores we drank brackish water and none for the last thirty-six hours, when even that was gone and our condenser was shut down for lack of coal. All the food was more or less spoiled and the condition of the living-quarters below decks was indescribable. But most serious was our coal consumption, which had been so increased by the strain required to buck the storm and by two days' extra steaming which the bad weather had required, that forty-eight hours before reaching Ponta Delgada, our objective in the Azores, we were forced to pick up a line from the May and, with banked fires under our old Scotch boilers, to proceed ignominiously under tow.

I shall never forget the last night of the eventful first "leg" of our "homeward-

bound." The warmth of summer had settled over the December sea. Very distant in a faintly misted sky the stars again appeared. Then, far off on the low black rim of ocean, winked an elusive point of light, a lesser star resting on the sea. We had made our "landfall"; broad on our starboard bow was the distant flash of the lighthouse on the eastern coast of the island of San Miguel.

Night paled and dawn flamed up from the sea, touching the western clouds with a brush of rose; up-pouring from below the horizon waves of incandescent saffron the sky deepened into blue. White planets and a thin white strip of brittle moon defied the day, and lingered in the sky. Up from the fringe of surf the smooth, green volcanic hills of San Miguel lifted from the sea on our right, high Mount Pica cloaked in a mantle of purple clouds.

Ahead, the town of Ponta Delgada, behind the breakwater, clung to the shore like a pile of gleaming shells upcast on the beach.

We neared the entrance. Beside us the gray graceful yachts of the first division, whom we would have beaten in despite their head start, if the Christabel's coal had lasted, steamed with us. The harbor was cluttered with vessels. Here were other yachts from Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, our own divisions, revenue cutters and gun-boats, sub-chasers, colliers, freighters, and at the entrance the squat monitor Tonapah. It was very gay and warm and restful after the past few hectic days.

For three days we lay in the harbor filling our bunkers with coal and our tanks with fresh water, and in the spare hours wandering through the clean old town

with its narrow streets of plaster houses tinted soft blue, pink, green, or yellow, and out into the fertile green country beyond, where long high walled fields and gardens reached far up the smooth, steep-domed hills almost to the windmills which perpetually waved thin sailed arms high above all. During these days American bluejackets swarmed everywhere, and the interest displayed by the surprising majority in the natural and historical points of interest recalled similar impressions of like nature which have convinced me that to "join the Navy and see the world" is no empty phrase for the right kind of a boy.

In three short days we were ready for the second and longest leg in our journey, the run to Bermuda. In the smother of a windy rain squall, we stood out of the harbor and by twilight the great cliffs and

conical volcanic mountains of the island had sunk beneath the horizon. In two weeks we expected to reach Bermuda, gauging our speed by that of the Christabel and further qualifying our progress by the fact that it would be necessary to tow her for a number of days.

There was but little incident to break the monotony of the long days that followed except the routine of our duties. For the most part, the weather was calm, but the yachts rolled heavily in the constant swells and sleep was difficult and the cooking and serving of meals a precarious operation. During my long hours on the bridge I watched the gulls that followed us on our passage, soaring and floating like swift white slivers of cloud by day, and by night like ghostly bats passing and repassing above us, gray shadows in the moonlight.

A great moon, that waned slowly as the nights passed by, lighted the sea. There were frequent squalls of rain and the sky by day or night was a constantly shifting setting of cumulous or nebulous cloud manes. From these high mountains, the moon burnished its path on the shifting, heaving ocean, racing from cloud to cloud, star-accompanied, in feverish haste to fulfill her nightly run. The green and red gleam of the running lights, the white beacon at the masthead and the yellow glow of the binnace, these and the moon and stars lighted our way.

At times during the long hours of the midwatch the blinker of the May, in diamond glittering flashes, spelled out to us fragments of "press news" caught by her wireless, the chronicle of the doings of our distant and busy world of which we were once a part, but from which we were now

far removed, and the happening there seemed of but little consequence to us.

Each day at noon the clocks were set back from fifteen to twenty minutes and by that much we all felt the nearer home. Never in those months at sea, have I been able to forget "what time it is now at home," and French time was always distorted to me by just the five hours' difference between it and the hour at home.

Christmas morning dawned in an almost cloudless sky. It was warm and in the soft air was the earthy fragrance of land. The sea was calm, and when I came on deck in the first gray light that comes an hour before sunrise, we were steaming slowly through the still water with the low shore of Bermuda on our bow. Slowly, the light welled up and touched the thin clouds in the east. The pale sky became a soft emerald that faded imper-

ceptibly into blue with ribbons of flame that laced across it.

Through a calm, milky-blue ocean, past guiding buoys that marked our channel, through the narrow cut in the island's rim we steamed to the harbor and dropped our anchor under the walls of St. George's.

Two days later we stood north again. Our original orders had directed us to sail for New York, but at Bermuda had come new orders assigning the yachts to various ports along the eastern coast. It was a disappointment to all of us, for both men and officers had anticipated our entrance to our greatest seaport, and had held the faint hope that some recognition for the long months of arduous service that had been performed would be given to us. But such could not be, and on the third day the May and the Remlik left us on their way to Norfolk, and the Christabel and the

Wanderer began to buck a rising gale off Hatteras with bows pointed straight for New London.

From a summer sea we passed rapidly into the cutting winds and cold waters of the north. Wind-and-rain clothing, heavy boots and knitted socks and scarfs began to appear. Through a long day and night when icy spray, hail and stinging rain swept the bridge with its machine-gun fire, we stood our watches, warmed and spirited with the thought of rapidly nearing home.

In a dark night, varied with squall clouds and hurried gusts of snow, the lookout in our foretop gave cry of "land," and soon after the flash of Montauk light was visible from the deck. All night the ship was alive with activity. No one seemed able to sleep and there was an endless washing, and pressing of clothing and uniforms.

At dawn we swung into the broad opening between Montauk Point and Block Island and a few hours later our anchor dropped in the dark water of the Thames. It was a quiet homecoming. No whistles greeted us; no throng of spectators saw our arrival. Silently, as they had labored in the long months of war, the yachts returned. But if there was no studied welcome, the familiar shores of our own land and the houses and buildings of an unmistakable American city told us that we were home again.

For the last time we dropped anchor, and lowered the "homeward-bound."

THE END

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